Milk Ties:

A Commodity Chain Approach to Greek Culture

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores aspects of contemporary Greek culture as it emerges from the study of production, distribution and consumption of dairy products. Contrary to views of commoditisation as cultural homogenisation, this research is based on the premise that commodity chains constitute a central mechanism for the negotiation of cultural meaning and the construction of social relations in contemporary societies. As part of material culture studies, the research draws on insights provided by a variety of disciplines, such as social anthropology, human geography, cultural studies and marketing.

In its totality, the thesis allows for a study of the transition to a highly marketised economy, considering simultaneously multiple levels of meaning formation and identity construction related to food. With particular focus on representations of time and space, the traditional and the modern, a variety of sites are explored, where cultural meaning is produced and negotiated: the marketing department of dairy companies, advertising agencies, small food stores, supermarkets and consumer households, while special reference is made to a rural-urban network of food provisioning established as a result of extensive internal migration. Fieldwork within those contexts is complemented with a consideration of global processes, such as the EU regulation on geographical indications and scientific claims about the Mediterranean model of diet. Dairy products are approached as the link between the various contexts of meaning that emerge through their circulation in society, and as mediators in the construction of social relations.

To my parents

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In the absence of a standard system of transliteration of Greek words into English, and due to a variety of versions adopted by various scholars and institutions, I have adopted, here, a 'reader-friendly' system, which makes the tranliterated word easily recognisable without compromising much the way it is pronounced.

Consonants

Despite the convention followed by most Greeks of attributing the letter γ with g, δ with d, and χ with ch, for reasons of correct pronunciation, I have added the letter h (i.e. gh for γ, dh for δ, kh for χ). However, I have retained the familiar spelling of names, whether this applies on names of people, locations, companies or things.

The letters d, g and b have been used in the transliteration to attribute the sounds that correspond to them in English, and which are produced in Greek through the use of the double consonants ντ, γκ/γγ and μπ respectively.

Vowels

The vowels η and υ are attributed as i and the vowel ω as o. In order to make transliterated words more easily recognised by the Greek speaker, I have retained the diphthongs αι, ει, οι, ου and have only replaced the spelling of the diphthongs αυ and ευ with af/av and ef/ev depending on how they are pronounced. Finally, I have indicated how the words are stressed following the single-mark (*monotonikó*) modern Greek system of accentuation.

All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is based upon a rather unconventional way of conducting an ethnographic study, although one that is likely to become increasingly important in the future (Marcus 1998; 2000). The research is structured by the desire to follow a commodity chain, that which is constituted by the production, distribution and consumption of dairy products in Greece. In order to approach contemporary Greek culture, I have chosen as a point of departure dairy products with focus on the social relations constructed through their circulation in society.

Pervading the thesis is the idea that through their circulation, commodities constitute one of the central mechanisms of cultural negotiation and change in contemporary societies. One of the aims of this Introduction is to present the grounds upon an anthropological study on commodities is based. This issue will be addressed in the first section. Having explored the idea of an 'anthropology of commodities', I then turn to commodity chains as an ethnographic approach. The focus will be on ways in which material culture theory can be useful in a commodity chain analysis. The theoretical part of the introduction ends with a few words on how the commodity chain approach has been applied in the thesis with regard to food. The second part of the introduction concerns issues of methodology and the ways in which the collection of data was carried out. Finally, in the third part there follows a description of the contents of the chapters and of the overall argument of the thesis.

PART ONE

Social Anthropology and Commodity Chains

On commodities

Does commoditization constitute a threat to the anthropological object of study? In the 1940s and 1950s it did. At the time it was a common practice among anthropologists to end their writings with a chapter on social change as the result of the arrival of western commodities. Commodities were seen as an erosion of culture and a threat to cultural specificity. As Miller (1995a) argues the recognition of commodity consumption as a source of knowledge about local cultures, has required a fundamental transformation of the basic premises of the discipline; it has required a change in one of its most basic conceptual definitions, that of the 'other' as a holistic culture threatened with extinction with the advent of modernity.

In 1925, in his essay on 'The Gift' Mauss (1966) brings objects to the centre of anthropological attention as 'total social phenomena' bound together with the identities of the persons involved in their circulation. Therein lies the concept of the gift: a 'prestation' of embedded things and selves that stands in opposition to the social disembeddedness caused by the commoditization and monetization of society. Based on Mauss's theory gifts and commodities became established in anthropology as representative of two different worlds, the so-called 'primitive' societies characterized by gifts and social embeddedness, and 'the West' inhabited by rationalising alienated individuals. The two terms came to refer to two different types of exchange characterizing the two types of society: whereas 'gifts' referred to the exchange of inalienable objects between interdependent transactors, 'commodities' denoted the exchange of alienable objects between independent transactors (Gregory 1982), typical of the capitalist mode of production. It was precisely this dichotomy, which has made the association between commodities and sociality incompatible, and which 'has been severely restrictive of our ability to take commodities seriously as objectifications of social relations' (Miller 1995b:147).

In the 1960s, the introduction of structuralism in anthropology through the work of Levi-Strauss opened new horizons in the study of objects. To the functionalist

argument that animals and plants are the ecological basis for society, Levi-Strauss contended that animals and plants are 'good to think with' (1964), advancing the theory that (natural) things are part of systems of signs and, as such, they mean or connote something beyond themselves. Whereas Levi-Strauss focused on 'tribal' societies, the structuralist paradigm proved particularly useful in the study of the commoditized 'West'. In the 1970s, Sahlins (1976) brings anthropology back home by arguing that 'bourgeois' culture 'is not radically different from that elaborated by the "savage" mind', and that 'We are just as logical, philosophical and meaningful as they are...' (1976:220). Sahlins talked about modern totemism applying Levi-Straussian theory to manufactured objects in Western society and proposing the idea that capitalist economy constitutes a cultural system. His argument was that the controversy within anthropology between practical and cultural reason should be transcended by acknowledging that cultures are meaningful systematic orders of both persons and things, and that the study of commodities can be used as a tool to discover the systematic order underlying the distinctiveness of Western culture.

At around the same period, in Britain, Mary Douglas was arguing a similar position. Focusing on goods as a system of communication, she developed an elaborate theory of how the mundane material world is a reflection of the social world, and is structured according to the same principles. Like Sahlins, Douglas and Isherwood (1980) questioned economists' assumptions about the rationality of consumer behaviour by demonstrating how consumption is more about cultural meaning and the communication of information, than it is about the functional satisfaction of needs. Both the work of Sahlins and Douglas became a starting point for significant debates as to the role of commodities as sources of information on classificatory principles and the prevalent social order.

The structuralist emphasis on the symbolic meaning of things in combination with moral concerns derived from a re-reading of Marx in the 1970s led to approaches in the study of commodities that were associated with various forms of symbolic resistance (for a review see Miller 1995b). Numerous studies tried to demonstrate ways in which societies resisted the alienating and destructive forces of commoditization by appropriating, 'taming' or incorporating the commodities into existing structures of meaning (e.g. Parry and Bloch 1989).

The problem with studying commodities from the point of view of resistance is that there is still an implicit presupposition that commodities have alienating power. The only difference in the resistance perspective is that culture is not associated with erosion but with continuity, as it continues to exist by appropriating the foreign elements. As Miller argues (1995a:268), an approach is needed according to which,

> the particular forms of consumption in a region are no longer viewed as part continuity of cultural difference and part loss. Instead they must be regarded as an authentic variant of the mass consumer societies that make modernity a comparative and heterogeneous presence rather than an assumed global homogenisation.

The problem with the gift-commodity distinction is that 'archaic' societies are essentialised by gift transactions, while Western industrial societies are essentialised as commodity-dominated and alienated (Carrier 1992). A challenge to the gift-commodity dichotomy was articulated in Appadurai's (1986) influential essay on commodities and regimes of value, where he argued that commodity-hood is contextually determined and not an intrinsic property of objects. Appadurai rejected the essentialist conceptualization of value entailed in the Maussian perspective and suggested instead that value is created through exchange. Economic objects, he argued, circulate in different regimes of value in specific spatial and temporal contexts. 'For comparative purposes, then, the question becomes *not* "What is a commodity" but rather "What sort of an exchange is commodity exchange?"' (1986:9) Commodities should not be viewed as things of a certain kind, but as things in a commodity phase, one of the stages in their own careers in society. (The idea of things having careers and biographies is explored by Kopytoff (1986) in the same volume). Appadurai's theory places emphasis on the context within which commodities circulate and situates the creation of economic value within the sphere of exchange. Such a perspective involves the transcendence of former distinctions such as gift-commodity, alienability and inalienability, use value and exchange value, and establishes the ground so that commodities are not treated as merely containing de-socialising power.

Appadurai's theory is important because it introduces the idea that commodities and their movement in and out of various contexts can be taken as a point of departure for an ethnographic study, and because it shows how the study of commodities presents new possibilities and potentialities for anthropology. In the following section, I will turn to the another theoretical source of useful insights with regard to the study of commodities: the contribution of material culture studies.

On material culture

Material culture studies are concerned with furthering our understanding of how, and why the study of things matters; such studies constitute an explicit acknowledgement that objects of our everyday world matter much more than they are given credit for (Miller 1998). Instead of dismissing mundane artefacts as trivial, from the material culture perspective artefacts are seen as an integral part in the mediation and circulation of meaning in contemporary societies.

Objects, thereby, become the starting point for the study of culture and society. The advantage of focusing on objects is that it enables the researcher to employ an inter-disciplinary approach to explore their role in society (JMC 1996). Another related advantage for the social theorist and, especially, for the anthropologist is that there is no need to predetermine social distinctions (Miller 1987). A study centred on the object might reveal more complex and fine distinctions than initially anticipated, which emerge in relation to the uses and interpretations of the object itself.

Contemporary material culture studies are significantly informed by the notion of objectification (Bourdieu 1977; Miller 1987; Strathern 1988). Miller explains the term as 'a dual process by means of which a subject externalises itself in a creative act of differentiation, and in turn reapproapriates this externalisation' (1987:28). In the process of creating things, people create themselves. In this way, subject and object become involved in a dynamic, dialectical and mutually constitutive relationship. This perspective transcends the object/subject dualism found in functionalist and structuralist approaches, where objects signify already established social distinctions.

Based on the notion of objectification is the association of material culture with social strategy. As Shanks and Tilley (1992:132) explain,

> Material culture as a social objectification is charged with meaning and structures in relation to social strategies. People symbolically construct and organize their activities in pre-constituted social field and simultaneously effect an ordering of the representation of those activities in language and in material objects as a symbolic scheme or modality for action in the world; activities can neither be understood nor explained apart from these.

As the production of material culture involves the representation of the activities that take place within a 'social field', it follows that material culture is related to the positioning of the subject in the social order and to certain social structures and strategies. This point is of particular relevance to the approach taken in the present study, which involves the examination of discourses that emerge at various sites or 'social fields' and their connection to the production of material culture. In the present study, material culture will be used as a point of departure for the comparison of discourses, social strategies and power relations between various social contexts.

The form of power that links with this perspective is based on practice (power to) rather than attributed to a dominant class (power over) (see Allen 1997 for different theories of power). In a reading of Foucault's theory of discourse and power and its relevance to material culture studies, Tilley (1990) has underlined the importance of understanding discourse as a form of power expressed through social practice and the production of material culture. What is more, compared to language and other forms of communication, material objects are very powerful in transmitting ideologies . Due to what Miller has called the 'innocence of facticity', artefacts have the power to naturalise ideology. Artefacts evoke variable interpretations and 'may become the source of actual struggles over conflicting interests' (Miller 1987:107).

I want to conclude this section on material culture by discussing the implications of Gell's (1998) theory of art for the study of commodities and commodity chains. Gell's theory of art is based on the notion that social agency can be invested in things, or can emanate from things, and in this sense he treads on the ground previously

explored by Miller (1987) with the theory of objectification. Gell's main contribution to the theory of material culture is that he recognises agency in the artefact itself. He contends that things can appear as agents in particular social situations, emphasising, however, the relational character of this concept of agency in the sense that artefacts are 'secondary' agents (or 'indexes') through which primary agents distribute their intentions. The concept of agency employed by Gell is exclusively relational and transitive. For any agent (person or thing), there is a patient (recipient), and conversely, for any patient, there is an agent. In this sense, Gell's theory of the system 'artist-index-recipient' assigns both an active and a passive role to each of its components, i.e. the artist/creator, the index/artefact, and the patron/public.

One important contribution of Gell's theory of art is that it makes the distinction between 'high' and 'low' art redundant. As he himself has argued in an earlier paper (Gell 1996), it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between an artefact and a work of art. It is, therefore, not surprising that his theory can be applied with ease to commodities, i.e. industrially produced artefacts. By focusing on the main structure of his theory, i.e. the relations between the artist, the index and the recipient, I will now proceed to demonstrate its relevance for the study of commodities and commodity chains.

At the centre of the relation between creator and recipient is the commodity. The roles of creator and recipient can be interchanged among manufacturers, retailers or consumers. The role of creator may be played by manufacturers through commodity design; by retailers through the allocation and display of the commodity; as well as by consumers through appropriation and invention of new uses and meaning for the commodity. In a similar way, all actors may acquire the role of recipient. Finally, the agency of the commodity should also be acknowledged. According to Gell's theory, as soon as commodities are created they have autonomy and can act independently of their initial creators. They can be active agents in the sense that they impose limitations on both their creators and their recipients through their materiality. (For an application of the theory of commodities becoming active agents see Rose 1995). The concept of the commodity as agent finds particular resonance in marketing literature and practice through the idea of branding as a process through

which commodities acquire personality and become humanised (Fournier 1998; Woodward 1996).

From this perspective, agency is dispersed among manufacturers, retailers, consumers and commodities, all integrated within a system of relations. The spheres of production, distribution and consumption as parts of a commodity chain are attributed equal weight as emphasis is placed on their interconnections and links. As we shall see, this has not always been the case in social approaches to production and consumption, to the presentation of which I will now proceed.

On commodity chains

Commodity chains are systems of inter-connected contexts in and out of which commodities circulate. In this approach, the contexts of production and of consumption are given equal weight in the creation of commodity meaning. This claim, however, is not at all self-evident if we look back at the history of the production-consumption relationship in social theory (see du Gay et al 1997 for a review). According to the production of consumption perspective, which is mostly associated with the Frankfurt School and the work of Horkheimer and Adorno (1979), consumption is determined by the logic of capitalist production. Through the mass production of commodities, the consumer is manipulated and is ideologically dominated and controlled. Advertising has attracted much of this critique, as it is considered to be a mechanism of manipulation and a source of inauthentic images that create dream-worlds. Underlying this is the idea that the desire and need to consume is a 'false' need created by producers and advertisers.

From this perspective, commodities represent forces of alienation both at the level of production, produced as they are through wage labour, but also at the level of consumption, as they are thought to create superficial satisfaction. Just by its commoditized form and its association to capitalism, the commodity acquires negative meaning and is identified as a source of alienation.

From the production of consumption perspective the source of value of the commodity lies within the sphere of production. In Appadurai's theory, which I discussed earlier, the creation of value is situated within the sphere of exchange.

Another theoretical trend, which emerged mostly in reaction to the production of consumption perspective, looked for the creation of commodity meaning in practices of consumption.

Orlove and Rutz (1989) contend that symbolic and political-economic processes are not representative of different parts of the system (i.e. production versus consumption) but occur simultaneously at all levels. They, thus, argue for a recognition that the sphere of consumption is an autonomous economic and social field, not dependent but equal to that of production and exchange. In their approach, which they call 'the social economy of consumption', consumption is not a mere reflection of the social world but plays a constitutive role in its reproduction. It is, therefore, important to place emphasis on the integration of consumption within the whole capitalist system and to stress its associating links.

According to du Gay et al (1997) two lines of critique were expressed in defence of consumption: consumption as social differentiation which draws on the work of theorists such as Veblen (1957) and Bourdieu (1992), and consumption as appropriation and resistance (e.g. de Certeau 1984). The approach to consumption as social differentiation is mostly based on the idea that the stratification of the social classes and class factions provides also the classificatory scheme for all cultural objects; and that it is through consumption practices that people mark their distinction and location in the social order. Focusing on structures of consumption, both Douglas and Bourdieu established a new sense of consumption in the sense that they provided novel mechanisms for the study of social relations in objectified form. However, their theories, which focused mainly on the communicative aspect of commodities, were criticised as being static and not taking into consideration historical change (the criticism applies much more for Douglas since Bourdieu took a step further by introducing into his work the theory of practice). On the other hand, in the consumption as resistance approach emphasis is placed on the production of meaning through practice and agency. Through appropriation, consumers convert commodified objects from an 'alienable' to an 'inalienable' condition and turn them to artefacts that symbolise identity and belongingness. From this perspective, consumption constitutes the main arena in which and through which people have to struggle towards control over the definition of

themselves and their values. This struggle is often posed against larger institutions such as capitalism and the state. As Miller argues, 'modern consumption is an attempt by people to extract their own humanity through the use of consumption as the creation of a specificity, which is held to negate the generality and alienatory scale of the institutions from which they receive goods and services' (1997b:31).

Interested in exploring the links between consumption and culture, McCracken (1988) placed great emphasis on the mobile qualities of meaning in society as a mechanism that links production with consumption. Using structuralist understandings of culture as a system of categories and principles that link those categories together to a coherent whole, his concern was to transcend the a-historical perspective and advance a theory of movement of meaning. According to his theory, meaning circulates in society along with the circulation of commodities and is 'constantly flowing to and from its several locations in the social world' (1988:71). He advances a detailed description of how cultural meaning is put in and taken out of commodities: meaning is transferred from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods themselves through instruments such as the advertising and the fashion systems. At the other end, a second set of instruments (rituals) transfer the meaning from the goods to consumers.

Although McCracken is concerned with demonstrating the fundamental character of economic embeddedness (Sherry 1991), his theory is formulated on the assumption that the relation between processes of commodity production and the production of meaning is confined within the sphere of advertising or the fashion system. Despite this limitation, however, his work constitutes one of the first attempts to capture the movement of meaning within a commodity chain, from the production of commodities to their consumption. As such, it has been very influential in studies of consumption, and his theory, along with that of Mary Douglas, have substantially informed understandings of culture by theorists in the field of marketing and consumer behaviour (Applbaum and Jordt 1996).

The growing interest in integrating production and consumption is manifested in the proliferation of approaches to commodity systems, chains, and circuits. There is considerable overlap between these perspectives, and their boundaries are not

always clear. They mostly come down to a focus on the commodity as a vantage point from which the reworking of meaning at different interconnected sites can be traced. The emphasis is placed on the practices that shape the material as well as the symbolic properties of the commodity.

Leslie and Reimer (1999), concerned as they are with the social construction of space, distinguish three types of study of commodity chains, acknowledging a considerable degree of convergence between them: global commodity chains, systems of provision and commodity circuits. Global commodity chains are derived from world systems theory (e.g. Appelbaum and Gereffi 1994), and approach production, retailing and consumption from a global dynamics perspective. A point of critique against global commodity chains is that they operate on a macro-level analysis and do not take into consideration human agency (Arce and Marsden 1993).

Another type of approach to commodity chains concerns the systems of provision theory, as this was developed by Fine and Leopold (1993). The authors propose an inter-disciplinary[1] approach to the study of consumption by integrating 'horizontal' perspectives/factors into a 'vertical' analysis that involves the whole chain of provision of a particular commodity or group of commodities. One important advantage of a vertical study of consumption is a sensitivity to the differences between commodities and the particular structures that determine their existence. The systems (or chains) of provision theory aims at integrating economic, political, technological, social, cultural and other processes into the study of consumer choice, stressing the existence of different interconnections between material and symbolic processes for different commodities and systems of provision.

One implication of the chains of provision approach is that the systems are distinctive and are characterized by their own structures and dynamics, i.e. of their consistent distinctive logic which governs the whole chain. Against this point, Miller (1997a) has argued that there can be a relative autonomy in the discourses that arise at the different sites of the chain. In his ethnography on capitalism in Trinidad, Miller took a vertical approach to consumption by integrating processes of

[1] Fine proposes that the term inter-disciplinary should be rather understood as 'an abandonment of disciplinary loyalties' altogether (forthcoming:20).

production (such as branding), advertising and retailing with consumption. Unlike Fine and Leopold who base their data on a more structure-dominated macro-perspective in which there is a logical causal connection between production and consumption, Miller's ethnographic study revealed that each site of the chain operates to a great extent according to its own autonomous logic. As is often the case, capitalism is sometimes less related to consumer needs or trends and more to the reproduction of its own categorisations, which are sometimes irrelevant to the categorisations found at other sites of the chain.

The third type of commodity chains presented in Leslie and Reimer are the commodity circuits (Johnson 1986). The importance of circuits lies in the fact that they are non-linear. The emphasis in the commodity circuit perspective in comparison to the system of provision is that the creation of meaning is perceived as the result of a dense web of interactions that are not limited to the spheres of production and consumption, but expand and involve the dynamic inter-relations of the sites related to the circulation of commodities.

The concept of circuit has been applied and developed in the work of du Gay et al (1997), who focus on a single commodity, the Sony Walkman, and trace it through different social and economic contexts. The story of the Sony Walkman is a study of the articulation of the processes of production, consumption, regulation, representation and identity, all of which constitute nodes at which the meaning of the commodity is generated. The authors argue that a study of how all these processes are integrated and articulated at a specific historic moment provides a comprehensive explanation of the meaning that an artefact comes to possess (1997:3).

Within the context of cultural studies the concept of a 'the circuit of culture' is grounded on the idea that economic processes constitute cultural phenomena. What is, in other words, attempted is a transcendence of the separate treatment of economy and culture and an acknowledgement that there is a mutually constitutive relationship between the two spheres. The relationship between economy and culture is conceptualised through the notion of 'cultural economy' (du Gay 1997). Based on the idea that culture permeates all of society (Hall 1997), economic

activities included, there can be no distinction between economic and cultural sites, as all forms of economic life constitute cultural phenomena.

One line of criticism against this approach is that no structural principle determining the movement of culture is recognized. As Fine (forthcoming) argues, there is no chronological or sequential movement between the nodes, which are to a degree chosen arbitrarily (e.g. why these five nodal points and not others?). Culture ends up being nothing more than a metaphor for all the sites where it is generated. Furthermore, there seems to be a conflation between the material circulation of commodities and the circuit of culture. What is glossed over is the unchanged fact that the production of commodities predates their consumption. An approach wishing to consider both the material/economic and the symbolic aspect of the commodity should take this fact into consideration. Nodes such as identity do not constitute sites of the commodity circuit but cut across it.

Another approach to commodity circuits, can be found in the work of Cook and Crang (1996), who view commodity systems as a mechanism for the production of spatial representations and the construction of geographical knowledges. Through the circulation of materials and their continuous 'displacement' (Crang 1996), geographical origins form part of discourses that emerge at different sites (see Cook, Crang and Thorpe 2000a for the construction of geographical knowledge through the notion of authenticity in food). From this perspective, commodity chains do not involve a unidirectional flow of material and knowledge but they constitute a system of interconnected sites, where geographical knowledge is produced, contested and reworked through the operation of different lores and social actors.

Anthropological approaches to food in Greece

I now wish to situate my work and the approach I take to food by examining other anthropological studies of food in Greece. Most anthropological references to food in Greece are incorporated within broader ethnographies that use an holistic perspective to approach small scale societies, in the main, rural (e.g. Friedl 1962; Campbell 1964; Du Boulay 1974; Herzfeld 1985; Hirschon 1989 on a community of refugees in an urban context). References to food are also included in relation to ethnographic studies of rituals, nameday celebrations (Bennett 1989) and death rituals (Danforth 1982; Panourgiá 1995). Institutions and practices of drinking, on the other hand, have attracted independently the attention of ethnographers with regard to the construction of gender relations and identities in rural (Damer 1988; Papataxiarchis 1991), semi-urban (Gefou-Madianou 1992; Moore 1995) and urban settings (Papagaroufali 1992).

Among the few anthropological studies in Greece with focus on food, and within the boundaries of rural small scale ethnography, Dubisch (1986) writes on food with relation to the symbolism of the female body, pollution and the drawing of social boundaries, following the Levi-Straussian tradition of the nature/culture symbolic dualism. More recent work on food in Greece includes a study (Dimitriou-Kotsoni forthcoming) carried out on a Dodecanese island, which explores relations of power within family members and the way they are mediated and constructed through the preparation, distribution and consumption of food. An entirely different perspective on food is taken by Yiakoumaki (2000), who focuses on the construction of ethnicity through food in relation to official state and European cultural policies.

A significant contribution to the study of food in Greece is to be found in the work of Seremetakis (1994), who uses a phenomenological approach based on experience through the totality of the senses to capture the ability of food to reproduce memories and identities. In her work, food as sensory experience becomes the means through which the notions of change and modernity find material expression. Finally, Sutton (2001) follows a similar theoretical perspective based on an anthropology of the senses as he explores further the links between food, memory and identity on an island of the Dodecanese.

My approach to food relates to an extent to many of the works cited above. Like Seremetakis and Sutton, I explore food as material culture containing the ability to shape our perception of the world. Like Dimitriou-Kotsoni, I am interested in ways in which food acts as mediator of power relations. And, like most of the above cited works, I am interested in the role of food in demarcating social boundaries. The main difference in my work is that I follow food in its circulation through various social and economic contexts and explore the social relations it constructs. I will discuss the idea of a thing-centred multi-sited ethnography in the next section. Here, I want to present some of the work that has been carried out on food from a commodity chain perspective.

Perhaps the most influential application of the world system approach in reference to a particular commodity is Mintz's (1985) work on sugar, in which the production, distribution and consumption of the commodity are studied in association with economic interests, political power, nutritional needs and cultural meanings. Although there is a substantial body of work carried out on commodity chains in relation to the internationalisation of the food industry (Friedland, Barton and Thomas 1981; FitzSimmons 1986, among others) few authors have tried to treat the whole of a commodity chain focusing on the material culture of food (Jackson and Thrift 1995). Exceptions are, the work of Miller (1997a), who undertakes an ethnographic study of the chain of beverages in Trinidad incorporating and contrasting insights derived from the spheres of production, advertising, retailing and consumption; and Cook's (1994) study of the food chain of exotic fruits in Britain, in which he explores ways in which groups of people working at different stages in the commodity system use 'maps of meaning' and ways of imaging the 'other' in the shaping of power strategies. Cook sees as an important advantage of 'critical ethnography' the opportunity to explore at a micro-level how power relations are formed within and between different sites/locales of the system, by taking into consideration factors such as the global-local interplay, agency and structure, and the interactions between the material and the symbolic.

PART TWO

Gathering the Ingredients: In the Field

On multi-sited ethnography

The larger capitalist systems become, the more difficult it becomes to capture them using conventional research methods. Major capitalist processes are no longer distinctly placed-focused (Lash and Urry 1987), and there is an increasing need to develop a methodology that transcends the limitations of place-focused ethnography. Marcus (1998) advocates the need for a particular kind of ethnography, what he calls multi-sited ethnography, which takes into consideration processes that take place simultaneously at interconnected contexts. Identities, he argues, are produced simultaneously in many different locales by multiple agents with various intentions; the place where one lives, for example, is only one social context, and perhaps not the most important, in which identity is shaped. From this perspective, the concept of a geographically-bounded community in the classic sense of shared values and shared culture does no longer serve the needs of ethnographic inquiry. A multi-sited ethnography concerns the idea "that any cultural identity or activity is constructed by multiple agents in varying contexts, or places, and that ethnography must be strategically conceived to represent this sort of multiplicity, and to specify both intended and unintended consequences in the network of complex connections within a system of places" (Marcus 1998 : 52).

Marcus describes many modes of construction of a multi-sited ethnography. A research of this kind might involve following a particular group of people throughout different contexts (as in migration studies) or, as in the case of commodity chains, following the thing (i.e. commodities, gifts, money or works of art). Alternatively, the researcher might follow the metaphor, the story or the conflict. Tracing things in and through contexts brings the commodity to the centre of ethnographic investigation and constitutes a useful tool for the ethnographic study of processes in the capitalist world system. The concept of multi-sited ethnography is particularly useful because it enables the shift of ethnographic investigation from a bounded locality to a system of circulation of objects, recognising in this way the integrating power of economy in contemporary societies and the consequent emergence of alternative coherent units of cultural analysis.

Although multi-sited ethnography is predominantly designed to capture the local-global interplay in chains of locations that are situated in substantial geographical distance (as in chains comprising different countries), in the present study multi-sited ethnography will be applied on a smaller scale, with one city as its main focus. The city will not function as a site in its own right but as a general point of reference comprising the various interconnected sites of the commodity chain. One of the main advantages in using multi-sited ethnography is that it provides the opportunity for critical comparative juxtaposition between the discourses that arise in various systematically related sites. The usual place-focused ethnographic narrative does not allow for the expression of counter-discourses and critical commentaries that the various sites make upon each other.

A follow-the-commodity type of ethnography recognises the power of the economy to create contexts of social interaction that are in certain cases more directly relevant to everyday experience than the place where one lives. In marketized societies the flow of commodities constructs structures of relatedness among actors that increasingly inform their understanding of the world, and as such may constitute valuable points of departure for an ethnographic project. Depending on the vantage point of the actor in the commodity chain, information and strategies vary and is important to recognise that discrepancies might emerge between worldviews and discourses at different sites. In the present work, an ethnographic investigation was carried out that focused on each site separately and then sought to compare and evaluate the degree of coherence in the formation of meaning of a group of commodities.

In the field

The material for the thesis was collected from January 1997 until June 1998. Most of the data was collected in Athens but geography did not constitute the main criterion in deciding what kind of information would be relevant to the research. The main focus was on dairy products and any piece of information that seemed to be related to their circulation in Athens. Interviewing or collecting material about dairy companies that were not situated in Athens but had their products available in the Athenian market, was well within the boundaries of the research.

One main reason for choosing dairy products for a commodity chain approach was the substantial discrepancy that existed among them in their degree of industrialisation. While milk and yoghurt were produced by the most industrialised and technologically advanced food companies in Greece, cheese production was still highly fragmented into local dairies. One of the basic premises of the systems of provision approach (Fine and Leopold 1993) is that grouping together commodities that have different chains of provision involves generalisations that limit our capacity to understand patterns of consumption. Choosing a group of commodities of similar organic properties but of varying degree of industrialisation allows for a critical comparison of the role of the chain in shaping the cultural meaning of the commodity. Furthermore, with their strong symbolic associations with nature, purity and tradition, dairy products seemed to provide a promising ground for the study of social relations.

My choice to follow a system of provision approach (production, distribution, consumption) instead of other less linear approaches to commodity systems was informed by the wish to juxtapose and compare power relations between the sites, expressed and materialised through the commodities.

The main sites, where I chose to conduct fieldwork, included the marketing departments of the leading dairy companies in Greece, the advertising agencies with which the companies co-operated, small food stores and corner shops, supermarkets of various sizes and, finally, households. Issues of farming and milk production were also taken into consideration but only through press articles, scientific reports and media coverage.

Gaining access to dairy companies that operate within an extremely competitive environment, and wishing to carry out participant observation of their marketing plans and strategies in all of them simultaneously, was a difficult task indeed. My visits to the companies were always pre-arranged in relation to the person who agreed to grant me an interview. Three times I found myself in an awkward situation, where I was directly or indirectly suspected of conducting industrial espionage or journalism (cf. Bakalaki 1997:511), especially when my questions were

perceived as being more commercially oriented than what was expected by a student of social sciences. There was a high degree of secrecy not only towards visitors but also towards lower ranking employees. The secrecy was explained to me as a need to control the leak of information that reaches the competitor.

Given those constraints, fieldwork in the marketing departments could not follow conventional understandings of ethnography, not only because I could not be an undisturbed participant observer but also because I had to be a part-time ethnographer as they were part-time workers (Lien 1997). Concentrating on one company rather than four would possibly have granted me more freedom of movement but I would have missed out on valuable information coming from their competition. Given that I was not to be allowed to participate in meetings in the preparation of campaigns or in negotiations with the advertising firms with focus on particular projects (cf. Lien 1997 on this type of ethnography in a marketing department), I used other techniques to acquire information. Instead of focusing on projects in progress, I focused on past campaigns and products where there was not much concern about the competitor finding out. Asking marketers to comment and explain the reasons that led to particular decisions regarding all those products did not pose any immediate threat, while it initiated conversation about how they conceptualised their role in the company, the company's role in the market and in Greek society in general, their competitors and the consumers. In some cases, I was given access to old marketing plans and strategies and was provided with their interpretations of why some projects were successful and others were not. Through TV and radio advertisements, newspapers and magazines I kept track of any new development in the dairy sector while receiving at the same time related comments from marketers, especially with regard to the competitor's moves. In this way, I had the opportunity to study simultaneously not only the discourse emerging in the company that was carrying out the project but also reactions and interpretations expressed by its competitors. No tape recorder was used, as I quickly discovered that its presence was detrimental to the amount and quality of information that marketers were willing to provide when the interviews were not recorded.

Dairy products advertising in Greece was a significant part of marketing strategies. Many hours of fieldwork were spent in front of TV screens at the companies'

premises discussing marketing strategies in reference to the advertised products. More information on advertising campaigns was collected from visits to the advertising agencies. Interviews were mainly conducted with the advert creators and occasionally the people who were responsible for client accounts. The people working in the creative division of advertising agencies felt free to talk as compared to those working in marketing departments. They provided a lot of information about their choices in the creation of dairy products advertisements, on the requirements and constraints imposed by their clients as well as on their occasional disagreements with previous advertising campaigns.

Advertising practices constitute a cultural industry in their own right and can easily serve as a separate location or context (see Miller 1997a; du Gay et al 1997) of economic and cultural production. Advertising has become increasingly sophisticated and informed by extensive market research, which upgrades the status of advertising companies from mere executors of the wishes of manufacturers to active agents in the shaping of advertising and marketing campaigns. Still, advertising and marketing remain two closely interconnected spheres, and a successful product campaign is to their common interest. In the present study advertising is seen as part of the marketing campaigns of the dairy companies. My intention has not been to underplay the importance of advertisers in the negotiation of meaning; nor to assume that what is represented in the advertisements is solely the result of the manufacturers' point of view. But as I found in the Greek context, to integrate advertising into 'production' was closer to the Greek reality than treating it separately.

The second site, where I conducted research, was the sphere of retailing. The rapid development of food retailing in the last two decades has been the cause of constant disputes in the food sector and of increasing pressure on dairy companies. I approached supermarkets in three ways. First, by conducting interviews in three of the biggest retail chains with the people responsible for the dairy category. Second, by volunteering to help out at the cheese counter of one big supermarket. As will be discussed in chapter 3, the cheese counter constitutes a significant source for cheese provisioning for urban consumers. The third way to approach retailing was through the sales network of dairy companies. Accompanying salesmen and sales

supervisors in their everyday jobs gave me access to information about the distribution of dairy products and the everyday negotiations between retailers and manufacturers. This turned out to be the most successful approach of all as it extended throughout the time of fieldwork and yielded a considerable amount of inside information.

One thing that I came to realise at the start of my field research was the importance of the small food store and indeed, the corner shop, in the milk chain. Participating in the distribution of dairy products provided me with the unique opportunity to enter into the sphere of everyday negotiation not only within the supermarkets but within the small shops where in total figures, at least during the time of fieldwork, more milk was sold than by the big chains. In the eyes of the shopkeepers I was working for the manufacturer and I was not spared their complaints regarding the lack of support by the dairy companies in view of the increased competition the small shops experienced by the supermarkets. Fieldwork in retailing allowed me not only to explore the constraints, intentions and strategies of retailers, but also to gain a deeper insight into the tensions and power relations that emerge along with the consolidation of the retail industry in Greece, and which become objectified on the commodities and their allocation and display.

Ethnographic methods were also applied for the study of one more site in the dairy products chain(s), and that involved practices and interpretations that took place during the act of consumption. Various definitions of consumption require a brief explanation as to how I have used the term. In economics, consumption refers to the choice and purchasing of commodities. This definition has influenced the way in which consumption is perceived in other social disciplines where terms such as 'sites of consumption' used to refer to shopping places assume an identification of consumption with shopping (see for example Jackson and Thrift 1995). On the other hand, in anthropology emphasis has been given on the use and appropriation of the commodities after the act of purchasing, initially to the neglect of shopping as an object of anthropological inquiry (Miller et al 1998).

In the present work, the study of consumption was mainly carried out within households, but attention was also placed on the provisioning of the commodities

(although I did not conduct ethnographic research on shopping in the sense of participating at the act of purchasing). With few exceptions, all the information on provisioning has been derived solely from informants' oral accounts. In many cases, I participated in the preparation and consumption of food. Though regular visits were not paid to the families, I visited each household at least twice and each time I spent several hours with the informants. All discussions that took place within the households were recorded.

Using ethnographic methods to study the consumption of dairy products in a city of at least four million inhabitants involved the complex task of finding a methodologically valid way of selecting the informants. At the beginning of fieldwork, I decided to concentrate on one particular community who lived in Athens, immigrants from the island of Crete. Since an integral part of my research was on capitalist development and modernisation in Greece, I chose to focus on a section of the urban population that its presence in the capital was the result of much the same project that I was investigating. Throughout the 20th century but especially in the 1960s and 1970s, the majority of the young rural population fled their villages for better life opportunities in the major Greek cities as capital investments and development projects were focused on urban areas. With their transfer to the city, the rural immigrants apart from maintaining strong bonds with the village, established networks and associations which became the main focus of their social, economic and political life in the city. My interest in rural immigrants was to explore how a population that was living on the boundary between the urban and the rural experienced food commercialisation.

Through the president of a Cretan association in Athens, I approached seven families who came from the same part of Crete and were members of the association. Attending many of their social gatherings and celebrations throughout the year gave me the opportunity to understand more about what it meant to be a Cretan immigrant in Athens and how this experience was translated into food practices. Although studying one social context of those peoples' lives in the city was not enough to account for their overall patterns of food consumption, I acquired sufficient information on how food can be used in such a context for the construction of identity and the drawing of social boundaries.

However, in the course of my fieldwork, I became concerned about confining my research within the boundaries of the Cretan community. As significant culinary differences have been recorded by food writers between the southern and northern parts of the country, my attention turned for a while to immigrants from Macedonia (northern Greece), but I soon decided not to exclude as informants native Athenians, who were born and brought up in the city. Using as a starting point personal acquaintances and friends, I established a wide network of informants, and the boundaries that I had, to an extent arbitrarily, drawn gave their place to a boundless ethnography where everyone qualified as an informant. I ended up with a variety of consumers, of different age, gender, professions, social class, origins, living in the centre of the city as well as in the suburbs, though I do not make any claim that my informants were representative of any of those categories. For this part of my research, I confined myself to one or two visits in the house of the informant, conducting totally unstructured recorded interviews during the preparation of food. I visited three informants from different households with origins from northern Greece and around fifteen native Athenians.

Using personal networks for my research (i.e. people I was acquainted with in the past before the start of my fieldwork) may raise concern about the lack of distance from the object of study in what is generally referred to as 'anthropology at home'. For that, I share the concern expressed by some anthropologists about drawing boundaries between 'known' or 'other' cultures, as this division presupposes a monolithic view of culture and 'entails insoluble difficulties in demarcating the boundaries of separate culture' (Okely 1996:4). These distinctions lead to endless debates as to the boundaries of the familiar, on the ambiguity of the geographical boundary (Okely 1996; Loizos 1992) as a determining factor of 'home anthropology', or whether 'home anthropology' is better defined in terms of techniques of organizing knowledge (Strathern 1987).

During fieldwork and in order to minimise the risk of taking 'evidence' for granted (Herzfeld 1983), I resorted to the extensive use of the tape recorder, ending up with numerous tapes of sometimes very general (as opposed to food-specific) material, which I transcribed along with the rest of the information. I do not know the degree

to which my own culture (whatever that entails) determined the data I collected. But in retrospect, I believe that it was very helpful that the writing-up of the thesis took place away from the field, within an environment where comparison was possible and where people not related to Greece offered insightful comments.

The collection of primary data was combined with other sources of material such as newspapers, food reviews and magazines, literary and historic books, scientific and statistical reports, EU regulations, and others. From January 1996 until June 1997, I collected newspaper articles that were related to dairy products. Everyday I browsed through an average of three daily newspapers (though not always the same ones throughout the whole period), plus three to four Sunday newspapers every weekend. The articles I collected were from the following newspapers, which belonged to a variety of ideological positions:

APOGEVMATINI (daily and Sunday)
ELEFTHEROS (daily and Sunday)
ELEFTHEROS TYPOS (daily)
KATHIMERINI (daily and Sunday)
KERDOS (daily)
NAFTEMPORIKI (daily)
TA NEA (daily)
TO VIMA TIS KIRIAKIS (Sunday)

I also collected many published articles related to the dairy sector from the archives of the Association of Greek Dairy Manufacturing Companies (SEVGAP) and the Botsis Foundation. Additionally, a lot of material was collected from magazines, of general and specialised interest, such as DIATROFI KAI YGEIA, OIKONOMIKOS TACHIDROMOS, SELF-SERVICE and others. Probably the most important source of printed material was the monthly food review TROFIMA KAI POTA (Food and Beverages), where I had the opportunity to follow the development of disputes, regulations, launching of products and advertisements, month by month throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

PART THREE

Argument and Description of Chapters

The thesis comprises three main chapters which correspond to the most important sites or contexts of the dairy chain: manufacturing, retailing and consumption. As an introductory chapter, however, I chose to present probably the hottest issue related to dairy products at the time of my fieldwork: the Greek application for the protection in the EU of the name 'feta' and of the inclusion of the cheese in the list of agricultural products of Protected Appellation of Origin. Due to its strong links to the Greek nation, the issue of feta turned out to be a valuable source of information within a national context on the official discourse of authenticity, tradition and modernisation, all of which constitute themes that repeatedly emerge in the course of the thesis.

The case of feta brings into sharp relief how a nationalist discourse finds material expression in food. Feta is the most widely produced and consumed cheese in Greece. When the EC regulation on geographical indications was introduced in 1992, Greece applied for the registration of feta as a cheese of Designated Origin. The fact that feta's registration was contested by other country-members was perceived in Greece as a threat to the nation, and feta emerged as a powerful symbol for its authenticity and purity. At the same time, the issue of feta brought to the surface underlying tensions within Greek society with regard to the concepts of tradition and modernity, a theme that emerges in all the chapters and is frequently negotiated through dairy products.

The second chapter explores the dairy manufacturing industry in Greece, which is probably the most dynamic and technologically advanced sector of the Greek food industry[2]. The emphasis is on the marketing and advertising of dairy products. In the first part of the chapter, I discuss ways in which dairy manufacturers have sought to increase their power by providing definitions of cultural concepts, such as

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[2] In 1994 among the first 13 largest companies (based on turnover) in the food and beverage industrial sector in Greece, six were dairy companies (source: *The 500 largest companies of the Food and Beverage Industry in 1994* Commercial Bank of Greece, National Communication Statbank in association with Kathimerini).

the traditional and the modern, through the production of milk and yoghurt. The second part describes how dairy manufacturers conceptualise their role as torch-bearers of Greek modernisation. By reference to TV milk advertisements, I discuss how the structures of competition between Greek and foreign companies gave rise to a discourse about Greek progress and modernisation, associating milk with images of industrial installations and computerised technology. The third part examines how capitalist production is sometimes less related to consumer needs or trends, and more to the reproduction of its own logic and its own categorisations. Marketing departments are sometimes governed by an autonomous logic that relates less to consumer needs and more to structures of competition. This point is explored in reference to the launching of a new yoghurt line. Finally, the last section refers to the power of the commodity in determining the form of social relations. It describes how the competitive relationship between the two biggest dairy companies took the form of two 'loving and caring mothers' and reliable food providers, as a result of an appropriation of milk's symbolic connotations of motherhood.

The third chapter is focused on retailing and how power relations become objectified through dairy products and their forms of display. Fresh milk and yoghurt are practically monopolised by the big Greek dairy manufacturers, who hardly allow any room for other foreign or local small producers. Consequently, manufacturers have a lot of negotiating power over retailers, which is accentuated by the fact that fresh milk in particular has a short shelf-life and retailers depend almost exclusively on manufacturers for everyday delivery. In contrast to the system of provision of fresh milk and yoghurt, cheese manufacturing is a highly fragmented sector in Greece and retailers play a determining role in choosing cheese suppliers.

In chapter 3 retail space is approached as a field of competition among manufacturers as well as between manufacturers and retailers. In the first section, which explores the relation between dairy manufacturers and small food shops, becomes clear how the competition among dairy companies has been transferred from inside the marketing departments to retail space. In this case, the power balance between manufacturers and retailers is more on the side of the former rather than the latter. It is argued that dairy companies have transformed the corner shop

into a 'brandscape' in their attempt to reinforce a strong bond between consumers and brands. The second section of the chapter explores the way in which power relations develop within the space of big supermarkets. Although manufacturers control the market of fresh milk and yoghurt and have not allowed the development of own-label products, retailers try to acquire power in less obvious ways, which find material expression on the shelves and on the way milk and yoghurt are categorised and displayed. By changing the organising principles of categorisation on the shelves, retailers use indirect ways to undermine the power of the big brands.

Although in fresh milk and yoghurt dairy manufacturers use retail space as a 'brandscape' (be it corner shops or supermarket shelves), in cheese their power is considerably diminished. Industrially produced and packaged cheese accounts for not more than 10% of total cheese sales of a supermarket. The main bulk of cheese is sold by supermarkets at the cheese counter. The third section of the chapter describes how retailers exert their power to minimise the degree of penetration of the big dairy manufacturers into the market of cheese and how they (re)produce cultural categories through the selection, display and promotion of cheeses.

The last chapter examines beliefs and practices related to the consumption of dairy products. The first section focuses exclusively on Cretan immigrants living in Athens and on the way food consumption in their households is structured through the experience of migration. Food provisions from the village, which always include cheese, shape the experience of space and time in the city and inform beliefs related to food commercialisation. Given that more than half of the urban population in Greece are post-war rural immigrants, the case of the Cretans in Athens touches upon issues that are of a much wider concern for patterns of urban food provisioning and consumption.

The remaining three sections of the chapter refer to the consumption of butter, cheese and milk/yoghurt respectively. Instead of proceeding to the cultural significance of food within a pre-selected a social group, these three sections emerged from associating each dairy product to cultural issues that relate most to its consumption (milk and yoghurt are grouped together because they both emerged as parts of the same discourse). In the case of butter, its structural opposition to olive

oil became the most significant factor in determining the dominant discourse related to its consumption. The consumption of cheese, on the other hand, was mainly linked to the cultural construction of place. Finally, milk and yoghurt attracted concerns about food adulteration and provided a good starting point for the study of beliefs about food commercialisation and the way it is expressed through folk classifications of food.

A critical comparison of the discourses that emerge at each site of the chain as well as between dairy products is undertaken in the conclusions of the thesis. Here, I discuss the ways in which a commodity chain approach to food furthers our understanding of Greek culture.

PART FOUR

Greek Modernisation: Political Economy and Culture

In the 1970s, Nikos Dimou (1976: 34) wrote:

> The roots of Greek unhappiness are two national inferiority complexes. One temporal – in the face of the ancestors, and one spatial – in the face of the 'Europeans'. Maybe unjustifiable, but all the same real, complexes.

The two 'complexes', which Dimou refers to, are intimately linked to each other and they are not at all a recent phenomenon. The 19th century European powers played a major role in shaping the political, ideological and socio-economic framework, within which the Greek War of Independence took place. It is no coincidence that classical antiquity, which was highly valued in the West, was selected to be the new nation-state's heritage. Classical antiquity, which was mobilised for the legitimisation of political claims and social recognition, had deep implications for the construction of a modern Greek identity.

After Independence and the formation of the modern Greek nation-state, one of the most immediate imperatives was the modernisation of the country, which was initially conceived as a process towards 'Europeanisation' (*eksevropaismós*). The modernisation of Greek society involved 'the enterprise launched by the intellectual and mercantile elites in the late eighteenth century to designate the Greek-speaking Orthodox a national community, free the Greek territories from Ottoman control, and define the Greeks as western' (Jusdanis 1991:xiii). The ideology accompanying this enterprise was called 'Greek Enlightenment', and, like the Western Enlightenment, it advocated its longing for progress.

The association of 'Europe' with progress was opposed to the 'Orient', which was often linked with backwardness and the Dark Ages of Turkish occupation. This oscillation between 'East' and 'West', 'Europe' and 'the Orient', has been extensively discussed by the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld, who has seen it as being imprinted on the Greek national identity (1987). For Herzfeld, Greek identity is

divided into two archetypes: the one of Hellenism, what he calls 'an outside view of Greek culture' and the one of Romiosini, an 'inside view of Greek culture' (ibid: 114). The former is linked with the ideal of ancient Greece as perceived by Western Europe, while the latter is associated with the Byzantine and Ottoman history of Greece.

'Purposeful modernisation' was, thus, a source of tensions and dichotomies that 'launched Greek society on a cataract of ideological oppositions (East-West, traditional modern, purist-demotic, classical-contemporary, ethnicity-state)' (Jusdanis :xiv). These ideological tensions have been inextricably tied up with the form of Greek economic development during the last century.

The economic development of Greece in the 20th century was not due to internal change and organisation but due to the adherence of the country to western capitalism (Vergopoulos, 1986). Especially after the Second World War, reparations for reconstruction, foreign aid, emigrants' remittances, shipping revenue, tourism and capital inflow from Greeks living abroad successively financed Greece's growth, consumption and investment needs. Excessive reliance on capital inflow generated by foreign sources outside Greece hindered the development of an industrial capitalist economy within the country. In the 1960s and 1970s the industrial development that took place in Greece was based on foreign capital and it was limited on heavy industry (chemicals and metallurgy). One-sided development not only did not structurally benefit the other sectors of the economy, but it became an obstacle to their growth. Mouzelis (1978) argues that the economic development of Greece was a form of underdevelopment, in the sense of imbalanced development that creates big gaps in the economic and social structure. Imbalanced development takes the form of a progressed, dynamic and dependent on foreign capital industry that is not organically linked to the rest of the economy. In this way the beneficial results of high productivity have no effect on the small production of the agricultural sector and the small industries (*viotekhnía*), but are instead transferred abroad. As a result, the Greek agricultural economy stagnated and remained within the framework of family enterprises.

Another implication for the Greek economy of the excessive reliance on foreign sources of exchange was the growing gap between the level of consumption and the productive capacity of the Greek industry. The imbalance between imports and exports led to an increasing trade deficit. Until the 1970s foreign sources of exchange provided the country with enough foreign currency to keep a steady trade balance despite the increasing imbalance between imports and exports. Imports ensured Greece with a raising standard of living, which did not correspond to the productive capacity of the country. As Vergopoulos puts it, 'Greece became known as the example of a country that has a higher standard of living compared to the means it provides' (1986:72).

Industrial development in Greece followed a pattern characteristic of the European south, what Vergopoulos calls 'the model of imported welfare'. He argues that the result of the contact of Greece with the dynamic development of northern Europe was enrichment (*ploutismós*)[3] without modernisation. In Greece, enrichment took place without previous social, political and institutional modernisation. The need for modernisation emerged after the 1970s, when the two oil crises hit western economies. Due to its dependency on foreign sources of exchange, the Greek economy was caught in a mechanism of imported inflation.

The country's economic dependency was further accentuated by a patrimonial state structure essentially based on clientelistic and patronage relations. State intervention and bureaucratic practices discouraged modernisation. Instead of promoting development and providing social welfare, the state operated as 'a recruiting officer and petty regulator'. Petras, Raptis and Sarafopoulos (1993:170) describe the ways the state actually operated:

> State bureaucratic intervention could not co-ordinate and promote forces with a view to modernisation and prosperity. Instead, the state turned itself into a recruiting officer and a petty regulator at the expense of its real responsibilities of providing social welfare. The patrimonial state thus exhausted itself by rewarding political loyalty through lifelong positions in government agencies and by promulgating myriad petty regulations for every branch of the economy.

[3] High standard of living, when a country becomes richer in material goods.

At the end of the 1970s and in the 1980s, the Greek industry started to develop. However, a serious impediment to its growth was the distrust that Greek consumers had developed for Greek industrial products. In order to enhance consumers' awareness about the negative effects that the purchasing of imported goods had for the national economy and Greek industry, the Association for the Promotion of Greek Products started in 1984 an extensive campaign with the slogan *'O epiménon Elli-niká'* (lit. He who insists Greek, wins), paraphrasing the Greek proverb 'He who insists, wins' (*o epiménon niká*). The slogan was advertised on television by a Greek comedian who was dressed in imported clothes and accessories, and who addressed to the Greeks the question: 'Who am I, am I imported too?' (*Poiós eímai; Eisagómenos eímai;*) The advertisement was one of many that appeared at the time, using as their main theme the concept of Greek *xenomanía*, i.e. adopting foreign products, ideas and manners, and attributing to them superior value.

In the 1980s, the efforts to promote Greek industrial products coincided with a strong advocacy of nationalism at the level of national politics. After the fall of Junta in 1974, Konstantinos Karamanlis became Greek Prime Minister and had as main priority the accelerated accession of Greece to the European Community. As Clogg contends, 'an unspoken assumption underlying the enthusiasm of many Greeks for Europe was that membership would somehow place the seal of legitimation on their country's somewhat uncertain European identity' (1992:177).

The motto used by Karamanlis to express his pro-European ideology was 'Greece belongs to the West'. To this motto, the political opposition of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement), which under the leadership of Andreas Papandreou won the elections in 1981, replied with the slogan 'Greece belongs to the Greeks' (Clogg 1992:179). The rhetoric of PASOK, which governed from 1981 to 1989 and from 1991 until the present, was at Papandreou's time aggressively anti-Western, while it presented the efforts for accession to the EEC as being in the interest of a rich and economically powerful minority.

As Kouremenos and Avlonitis (1995) present, in the 1980s significant changes took place in Greek society, which had great impact on the marketing environment. Major advertising companies were consolidated, Greek industrial companies put

more emphasis on marketing, and the distribution system became more rationally organised. The informal economy steadily rose in the 1980s to the highest level among OECD countries, large numbers of people remained self-employed, while the migration pattern was reversed as many Greek immigrants returned home. Finally, in the eighties, the urbanisation process came to an end and was replaced by a trend towards suburbanisation among the most affluent segments of the urban population.

Most of these themes, which I have here briefly addressed, will repeatedly emerge in the course of this thesis, as they become objectified in everyday commodities, such as dairy products, and are constantly contested and negotiated.

CHAPTER 1

DAIRY PRODUCTS AS GREEKNESS: THE CASE OF FETA

1.1 Introduction: food as embodiment of *tópos*

> In ancient Greek rhetoric, *topos* represented a site of learning to which speakers returned again and again for reliable phrases, expressions, and motifs that regularly impressed an audience. In its more general Greek usage, *topos* designated a physical location considered worthy of description ... Perhaps it is useful to dwell on this dual resonance: *topos* as citation and *topos* as physical place. To think of *topos* simultaneously as a site of learning and of geography is to raise the question of the reciprocal interdependence of literature and place. By historical coincidence, *topos* retains both rhetorical and spatial referents in modern Greek. While it refers in certain cases to territory, piece of ground, place, position, or opportunity, *topos* also indicates a passage in a text or, more generally, a common citation, a commonplace (As in the Greek *koinos topos* and the Latin *locus communis*). Even in this last sense, however, *topos* in Greek marks a physical place of return, a site where the past makes its presence felt. (Leontis 1995: 18-19)

Tópos is an all encompassing term: it refers both to the physicality and the history of a place; it has at the same time a spatial and temporal dimension; it denotes more than just a piece of land - it denotes the land where certain people live and, as such, *tópos* is something they all share, physically and symbolically.

My interest in *tópos* derives from the fact that it is a term frequently used in Greece in association with production. The products of *tópos* (*ta proiónta tou tópou*) are usually agricultural products which are locally produced and which are an invaluable source of income for the local population as much as they are an integral part of its tradition and culture. Locally produced food (the product of *tópos*) is a powerful vehicle for the study of place and identity (cf. Ohnuki-Tierney 1993; Bell and Valentine 1997:178-81; Kisbán 1989). The land and traditional practices become literally embodied, incorporated into the human body, through the consumption of food (Lupton 1996). One food product, in particular, that exemplifies well the relation of *tópos* with identity, is cheese. Similar to wine, cheese is one of those

products of *tópos* that vividly expresses the close link between the physical characteristics of an environment, the practices of the people who inhabit it, and their sense of sharing a common identity (cf. Bell and Valentine 1997:155-61; Giordano 1987).

Feta is the most widely produced and consumed cheese in Greece. When the EC regulation on geographical indications was introduced in 1992, Greece applied for the registration of feta as a cheese of Designated Origin. The fact that feta's registration was contested by other country-members was perceived in Greece as a threat to the nation, and feta emerged as a powerful symbol of its authenticity and purity.

1.2 Feta and the 'goat-sheep' in relation to Greek economy

In the mountainous Greek landscape live 6.5 million sheep and 4 million goats[4], and more than 250,000 Greek families live on sheep and goat shepherding. The Greeks refer to both animal types with one word, 'the goat-sheep' (*aighopróvato*), and call the milk they produce 'goat-sheep milk' (*aighopróvio ghála*). Goat-sheep milk is used for the majority of Greek cheeses, very few of which are produced from cow's milk (Figure 1.1). As is evident from Figure 1.2 in 1994 goat-sheep cheese represented around 77,6% of the total cheese production in the country. Of these cheeses, feta alone accounted for around 80% of the goat-sheep cheese production and 61% of the total cheese production in the country.

Until 1991, goat-sheep milk and consequently feta were under price control. The gradual lifting of price controls on agricultural products as part of the Common Agricultural Policy opened the cheese market for the big dairy manufacturers. As the demand for goat-sheep milk increased and manufacturers kept offering higher prices, the price of goat-sheep milk soared. Accordingly, feta's price almost tripled in two years. Due to the entrance of big manufacturers, in 1995 the production of feta increased by 12-15 thousand tons. Meanwhile, feta's high price left a market gap for cheaper alternatives, such as imported feta from cow's milk, or the use of milk

[4] These are 1994 figures. More precisely, in 1994 6.6 million sheep produced 641,300 tons of milk, 3.9 million goats produced 436,200 tons and 237,000 cows produced 769,300 tons. Source: Ministry of Agriculture 1996.

Figure 1.1 Greek Cheeses

powder as well as cow's milk by local producers. Increased imports of feta and adulteration by local producers, in combination with feta's high price and increased production led to 35,000 to 40,000 tons of unsold stock. The prices of feta and goat-sheep milk collapsed, and the farming sector suffered the worst crisis in decades[5]. There were farmers' demonstrations all over Greece, and barricades at vital communication points split the country into north and south. In despair the farmers threw milk on the streets and outside the buildings of local authorities (Figure 1.3). By 1996, feta's registration in the EU as a Greek PDO, that would ensure a high price and protect it from cheaper cow milk alternatives, had become an important national issue with deep political and economic implications.

Figure 1.2: Production of cheese in different categories (1994)

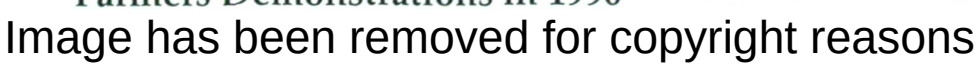
Cheese production (in tons) for 1994

Cheeses made from goat-sheep's milk			**98,559**
Soft cheeses		82,525	
feta	*77,795*		
other	*4,730*		
Semi-hard cheeses		4,886	
Hard cheeses		11,146	
Cheeses made from cow's milk			**17,763**
Cheeses made from whey			**10,576**
Total Cheese Produced			**126,898**

source: Greek Ministry of Agriculture 1996:50

[5] For an account of the feta crisis see Oikonomikos Tachidromos 29/2/96 pp. 81-82.

Figure 1.3 Farmers Demonstrations in 1996



Farmers loose the milk
onto the street outside
the Prefecture building
in Yannena, Epirus.
(source: Eleftheros
Typos, 7/2/96)

Farmers demonstrat
in Verroia, Macedor
(source: Eleftheros
Typos, 7/3/96)

Cartoon: On the left,
the Government says
'Feta is Greek!'
The farmer answers:
'Will we see it again?'
(source: Eleftherotypi
7/3/96)

1.3 Feta in the EU

> The story begins with the fat cows of the Danish fields, that are called 'sheep' and produce cheese, for which whitening agents are used to make it look like the Greek feta from goat-sheep milk. (Apogevmatini tis Kiriakis, 20/2/94)

Feta's origins and identity first became an issue in 1984 during the annual meeting of the D Committee of the International Milk Federation, when Denmark applied for the exclusive use of the name 'feta' for a number of Danish cheeses made in brine. Denmark's application led to disagreement as to feta's specifications. Two different views were expressed that polarised European countries into north and south. Northern European countries (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Norway and Sweden) claimed that feta is produced from cow's milk, whereas southern European countries (Greece, Spain, Italy, France, Portugal and Switzerland) held that feta is produced from sheep and goats' milk. Unable to reach a decision, the International Milk Federation submitted the issue to the judgement of the FAO/WHO who, in 1990, decided to discontinue the elaboration of an International Standard for feta cheese (FAO/WHO 1990:13).

Meanwhile, in 1988, in Greece a new article was introduced to the Greek Code of Food and Beverages[6], that gave exact specifications for the production of feta among other Greek cheeses. According to the Code, feta is a product originating from sheep's milk or from a mixture of sheep and goats' milk (the latter should not exceed 30%). Feta is produced in all mainland Greece (Macedonia, Thrace, Epirus, Thessaly, Sterea Hellas, Peloponnese) as well as on the island of Lesvos. By effect of the new legislation, the circulation of cheese made from cow's milk with the name 'feta' in the domestic market was prohibited, and imports of Danish 'feta' in Greece became illegal. Denmark took the issue to the European Commission and contended that the Greek legislation confined the imports of a cheese that is not illegally produced in another member country. On 22/12/1988 the European Commission ruled that the Greek legislation did not go against the Treaty of Rome and that the prohibition might stand. In 1989, Denmark brought a new charge against Greece on the ground that a great part of the feta circulating in Greece is made from a mixture of sheep and goats' milk with cow's milk, if not exclusively from the latter. In 1990, the

[6] The law took effect in 1994; see Code of Food and Beverages article 83/FEK 8/B/11.1.94.

Commission sent a letter to the Greek government enquiring about the measures taken by the Greek state to prevent the adulteration of feta inside the country. Finally, on 4/8/1993, the Commission confirmed its former decision (of 22/12/1988) that the Greek legislation confining the use of the name 'feta' to cheese made of sheep and goats' milk does not contradict the European legislation and Danish imports are not illegally prohibited.

In 1992, the European Commission introduced a regulation (2081/92) on the protection of Geographical Indications and Designations of Origin for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs, with the purpose of harmonising the different national practices adopted by member countries to protect their local agricultural products. Under the new regulation, member countries acquired the right to apply for the protection of products with identifiable geographical origin. Feta appeared again on the agenda, and this time the application for feta's protection as PDO (Product of Designated Origin) was filed by Greece. The Greek application was strongly contested by other feta-producing countries in the European Union, and the issue turned into a marathon dispute.

The Greek side argued that feta is a white cheese in brine, produced in Greece since antiquity from sheep's milk or from a mixture of sheep's and goats' milk. One of the main arguments that was provided in the Greek application to support the case that feta is not a cheese made from cow's milk was the issue of colour. Cheeses produced from cow's milk acquire a yellow colour unless bleaching agents are used to whiten them. It is the use of sheep's milk that gives feta a naturally white colour. The following abstract forms part of the argument, as it was presented in a letter from the Greek Government to the European Commission in 1992:

> If the cheese that has been produced from time immemorial were made from cow's milk, as its producers [in Europe] claim, then due to the natural qualities of this milk the colour of feta should be yellowish; and that should have been the colour of the authentic feta, and as such it would have been recognised by consumers... And that is why the bleaching of the cheese was invented, so that it looks like the real feta and exploit its reputation... (Galaktokomia 1992:18).

In April 1994 the European Commission, after conducting a Eurobarometre survey among 12,800 EC citizens, concluded that the name 'feta' is not generic but to most people it is a reminder of Greek provenance. In 12/6/96 the Commission registered feta as a PDO, and granted to the other member countries a five year period of adjustment.

In September of the same year, Germany, Denmark and France appealed to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) against the registration. In their appeal, the three countries supported the case that feta (which, as they emphasised, is a word not of Greek but of Italian origin) is a generic name and corresponds to a very basic process of cheese production that exists under different names in all the Balkan countries. What is more, not only has Greece for many years tolerated the production of feta from cow's milk in other countries, but it also legally imported cow's feta from Denmark from 1965 until 1987. Feta has been produced in many other member countries in equal, if not greater, quantities to Greece for many years. During all these years, European legislation had never considered feta to be a cheese of particular origin.

In March 1999, the ECJ annulled feta's registration as a PDO on the grounds that the procedure the Commission had followed in 1996 to determine whether the name 'feta' had become generic or not was void. The Commission had not sufficiently considered the situation that existed in the other member countries where cow's feta was legally and uncontestedly produced and circulated.

1.4 Of feta and marbles: a struggle for the nation

There is enough evidence to suggest that claims against feta's registration as a Greek PDO were interpreted in Greece as a threat to the nation and as one more battle that had to be fought in a long history of national struggle. To start with, references to the dispute over feta that appeared in the Greek press -from daily newspapers to magazines of general interest- were full of warfare metaphors. For example, when in 1993 the use of the bleaching agent Patent Blue V which was used to whiten Danish feta was banned in the EC, the news was reported in a Greek dairy review in the following way:

Figure 1.4

Cartoon 1 Wars fought for the nation (source: Eleftherotypia, 7/3/96)

Cartoon 2 Feta and the Macedonian dispute
(source: Eleftheros Typos, 8/3/96)

> Feta: The great battle in the EEC starts now
> The Danish 'feta' lost a battle in the Community on the 11th of November after the final adoption by the Ministers' Council of the directive concerning bleaching agents used in food... The war, however, is not yet lost as Copenhagen is preparing a forceful counter-attack ... on many fronts... (Galaktokomia 1993:10)

Financial newspapers, too, frequently referred to the developments in feta's case using terms from warfare:

> Danish ... expedition against feta
> A battle for the survival of Greek feta in the international markets will take place in tomorrow's meeting of the European Commission in Brussels... If the Greek feta wins tomorrow's battle, then there are chances that it will win the war. (Naftemporiki 20/2/96)

And:

> Greece will fight one more crucial battle for Greek feta tomorrow in the weekly meeting of the European Commission. The main opponents are the Danes, who have set out on a paneuropean expedition to conquer feta's Greek name. (Kerdos 20/2/96)

The concept of warfare and its role in positioning the feta issue within the wider context of the battles that the nation has fought for its independence throughout the centuries was incisively caricatured in a daily newspaper (Figure 1.4, Cartoon 1), which pictures five Greek soldiers in mode of attack waving their swords; inscribed on their shields are the names of ancient battle-sites of the Persian wars of the 5th century BC (Marathonas, Salamina), as well as battle-sites of the 19th century Greek War of Independence (Gravia, Alamana). The site inscribed on the shield of the first soldier (Parnassos) is a feta-producing area. Their battle-cry, 'FETAN I EPI FETAS' is a paraphrase of the famous ancient Spartan phrase 'I TAN I EPI TAS' (lit. either with the shield or on the shield), which was said by the mothers to their sons before they left for the war, and meant that they should come back either winners holding their shields or dead lying on their shields[7].

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[7] On the right hand-side, a little fellow paraphrases a Greek patriotic poem:

> What is our country? ... Is it maybe feta? Maybe metsovone[1]? Touloumisio or kopanisti? Unsalted mizithra, sheep yoghurt? Is it manouri, or telemes? Aaall is our country!!! And *souvláki*, and

The recognition in 1996 that feta was a Greek product was received in Greece as a national victory. Due to the crisis that hit the cheese sector in 1995, by 1996 feta's protection in the EC had become an important national issue with deep economic and political implications. Feta became part of the political agenda and references to the governing party (PASOK) abounded:

> Only Tzoumakas[8] 'sliced' (*ékane fétes*)[9] the [European] members...
>
> Let Mr. Simitis[10] say that he will answer to the Turks, if they dare to question our sovereign rights (what does he think they have been doing all this time?), let the others say that they will not accept a compound name for Skopje... Only one succeeded in crushing the members and their demands, in winning glory for the Greek colours, in imposing the Greek name: Stefanos Tzoumakas! Why don't you give a lesson, Stefane, to Pagalos[11]? Exactly how did you come, see and conquer in Brussels, winning the war for ... feta? Or is this going to be the only glorious page in the history of PASOK's cunning tricks (*magkiá*)? (Apogevmatini, 23/5/96)

In the above excerpt the Greek Minister of Agriculture is praised for 'imposing the Greek name'. 'Fighting for a name' was at the time a common concept encountered in Greece, as was also the phrase 'battle for the name' (*mákhi ghia to ónoma*). The phrase mainly referred to the dispute between the Greek government and the government of Skopje over the use of the name 'Macedonia'. The two issues were frequently associated (as in the newspaper comment 'We won the name feta and we are losing the name Macedonia' [12]) and were talked about in terms of securing the national interest by protecting the name. Comparing the national discourse on the

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> *tzatzíki*, and *khoriátiki* (Greek salad) and *mousakás*, and *papardhéles*, and *parlapípes*, and *tzámba mágkes*, and *arpakhtés*[2].
>
> [1] Metsovone, touloumissio, kopanisti, mizithra, manouri and telemes are all Greek cheeses.
> [2] Papardhéles = people who talk a lot; Parlapípes = people who talk nonsense; Tzámba mágkes = people who get things for free in a cunning way; Arpakhtés = the act of grabbing money without effort

[8] The Greek Minister of Agriculture at the time.
[9] This is a pun: 'feta' in Greek means slice. 'To slice' the EU members is the equivalent of 'to mince' them.
[10] The Greek Prime Minister, leader of PASOK.
[11] The Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time.
[12] Eleftherotypia 7/3/1996

Macedonian dispute with baptismal naming disputes at kinship level, Sutton (1997a) suggests that the concept 'battle for the name' becomes meaningful if one considers the local significance of naming for historical continuity and property transfer.

The disputes about feta and Macedonia reflected the widespread view that Europe should grant to Greece the recognition that she historically deserves. This view is clearly expressed in a cartoon (Figure 1.4, Cartoon 2) which appeared in a daily newspaper in 1996. It pictures the EU personified as a woman standing in front of a barrel of feta, holding a knife with a piece of cheese on its edge, and pronouncing 'I recognise that feta is Greek!'. Opposite her stands a Greek in the traditional kilt (*foustanélla*), holding a shepherd's crook with the inscription: 'Macedonia, too, is Greek' (Eleftheros Typos 8/3/96).

As in the Macedonian dispute, where evocations of Alexander the Great and Greek historical continuity for over 2,500 years were used to legitimise Greek political claims, feta's authenticity was also grounded in references to ancient Greek sources. Significant evidence for feta's long presence in Greece constituted the reference to the cheese-making practice of Cyclops Polyphemus in the Homeric epic Odyssey:

> Archaeologists and philosophers have found evidence of feta's production in the terracotta tablets of Mycenae and Pylos, as well as in Homer's epic, The Odyssey ... Initially, feta was produced in the sheepfolds of shepherds - Cyclops Polyphemus in Odyssey was such a shepherd. That cheese that Cyclops Polyphemus and the ancient Greek shepherds produced was the forerunner of today's feta. Aristophanes makes reference to '*khlorón tíron*'[13] and '*trofalídha*'. References to the presence of the cheese in the diet of the ancient Greeks are also to be found in Aristotle, in 'Dipnosophistes' of Athineos and in the Palatine Anthology itself (Galaktokomia 1996:54).

According to this discourse, feta has been an integral part of Greek tradition since Homeric times, as has also the production of cheese from sheep's and goats' milk. Professor Anifantakis[14], who has been one of the protagonists in the registration of Greek cheeses as PDOs, presents the Greek argument in his writings:

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[13] *Khlorón tíron* in ancient Greek means 'fresh cheese'

[14] Prof. Anifantakis is teaching at the Agricultural University in Athens and was until recently president of the National Dairy Committee.

> Cheese making in Greece has a long history and tradition. Most ancient epic poems include references to cheese, which was a significant part of the diet. Cheese was included in the offerings of ancient Greeks to their gods on the mountain Olympus. Cheese-making has been established since the time of Homer. Consequently, Greeks have great experience and traditions in cheese-making, which accounts for the great number of cheeses that are nowadays produced in the country, as well as for the high annual cheese consumption per capita, which amounts to 22 kilos; a quantity that is regarded as amongst the highest in the world, if not the highest ... Since antiquity, most Greek cheeses have been produced from goat-sheep's milk, possibly because of the unsuitability of the Greek landscape for cow farming. Three quarters of Greek land is mountainous or semi-mountainous and this is considered to be the main factor that established sheep and goat farming in the country ... It is worth noting that whereas the contribution of Greece to international and European cow's milk production is insignificant, her contribution to goat-sheep's milk is important (Galaktokomia 1996:46-47).

In the argument as presented, feta's Greekness and its link to Greek history and tradition is mainly based on the use of sheep's and goats' milk. In terms of the physical properties of the cheese, the use of sheep's milk gives a naturally white colour. The issue of whiteness became the cornerstone of the discourse about feta's authenticity because it allowed the conceptual association of the material properties of the cheese and the Greek landscape, with notions of purity and pollution.

Feta's whiteness was paralleled to the whiteness of Greek antiquities. In 1994, in an effort to reduce the level of imported cow feta, the Ministry of Agriculture launched a TV commercial aiming at increasing the awareness of Greek consumers about the difference between authentic sheep feta and inauthentic white cow's cheese. The commercial consisted of a succession of images starting with the Parthenon marbles, and continuing with images of nature, sheep and goats, and industrial dairy installations. It ended with a map of Greece in the background and the phrase:

Here [in Greece],	(*Edhó,*
we know about marbles,	*ki apó mármara kséroume*
and about lime,	*kai apó asvésti,*
and we can tell feta	*kai ti féta ksekhorízoume*
from white cheese.	*apó to lefkó tirí*)

Another example of the association of feta with Greek antiquities was an article in a daily newspaper (Ta Nea, 11/10/96) where reference is made to the looting of Greek

authenticity by the Europeans. Driven by Germany, Denmark and France's appeal in 1996 against feta's registration as a Greek PDO, the commentator writes:

> The Germans are coming back ... And close by are the Danes and the French. They want to eat our feta, and to be exact the protection our country secured ... And the most surprising of all [of their assertions is] that the Danes have made 'feta' for 50 years now, but from cow's milk (which in order to become white...). Yes, (our) antiquities from Pergamon are always in a museum in Berlin. Yes, they guard them...

The concept that associated feta's whiteness with the Greek marbles was also used in the commercial sphere for the promotion of Greek dairy products abroad. FAGE, the biggest yoghurt manufacturer in Greece, advertised white yoghurt and packaged feta as 'tastier than the Elgin marbles', while claiming that they had found a way to restore the lost glory of Greece (Figure 1.5).

The whiteness of the ancient marbles epitomises the aesthetics of purity and sacredness. As Yalouri (2000) has demonstrated, the urge to keep the Athenian Acropolis clean and untouched is rooted in notions of purity, pollution and sacredness that characterise the way the monument is experienced by the Greeks. The whiteness of the marbles is considered to be in accordance with the ideals that classical antiquity represents. At the same time, any foreign attempt to interfere with the natural colour of the marbles is regarded as inauthentic (e.g. the whitening of the Elgin marbles by the British Museum was perceived by the Greeks as erasure of the patina of age). Notions of purity and pollution are closely linked with beliefs of sacredness (Douglas 1966). The ancient marbles evoke a feeling of sacredness, and any sign of indecent behaviour that implies lack of seriousness and respect is prohibited at the ancient site.

A similar discourse was manifested in the case of feta and the cheese was linked with notions of cleanliness, pollution and respect. Due to the crisis that hit the cheese sector and with feta's registration pending in the EC, there was considerable pressure on state authorities for systematic controls that would keep the domestic market free from cow feta or other forms of 'adulterated' cheese. For more than a year, news about 'unsuitable' cheeses circulating in the market abounded in the newspapers, quite often creating confusion as to the reasons they were considered

Figure 1.5 FAGE Advertisement

unsuitable for consumption. Terms used for the cheeses such as 'adulterated' (*nothevména*), 'unsuitable' (*akatállila*), 'rotten' (*sápia*), 'spoilt' (*khalasména, alloioména*) or 'poison' (*dhilitírio*) were interchanged, mainly creating a sensation more than they informed the consumer. It was as though the significance of such news lay in informing people that controls were indeed carried out and measures were being taken so that the market was cleaned-up. References to cow's feta were made in a language of inauthenticity, such as through the use of the term 'monkey' as another word for imitation (cf. Ohnuki-Tierney 1990 with respect to Japan). Monkey-feta (*féta maimoú*) was an expression which often featured in the press in phrases such as "Feta' from ... monkey's milk!' (Eleftherotypia 15/2/96) or in texts such as the following:

> The Greek Feta, the most traditional Greek product, won yesterday the first and decisive battle at a Community level against its opponent, the Danish feta-monkey, as well as other imitations coming from other member countries (the Netherlands and France). (Naftemporiki 7/3/96)

The urge to rid the market of illegal, inauthentic and 'dangerous' feta was expressed in the press by the use of titles such as, 'Cleansing of the milk-feta circuit by state authorities' (*Eksighíansi tou kiklómatos*[15] *ghálaktos-fétas apó tin politeía*)[16] as well as, 'We should protect feta's cleanliness like our eyes' (*Na profiláksoume tin katharótita tis fétas ópos ta mátia mas*)[17]. Protecting feta's 'cleanliness' had significant economic and political implications (one of the arguments against feta's registration as a PDO was the free circulation of cow's feta in the Greek market) but it was also something more than that: it was an urge to 'cleanse' Greek tradition from impure foreign elements and restore its authenticity.

It is illuminating to see how the prohibition in 1994 of the bleaching agent Patent Blue V, which was one of the agents that was used in Denmark for whitening feta, was received in Greece. Articles appeared in the press using the term 'feta-poison!' emphasising the health dangers of Danish feta. When the term was also used in an

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[15] *Eksighíansi* means making healthy, restoring somebody to health, but it is also used with reference to cleansing from corruption.
Kikloma means circuit and is a term often used with reference to illegal operations.

[16] Apogevmatini tis Kiriakis 7/4/1996

[17] Galaktokomia 1996:54

economic review which was entitled 'Danish feta: it is imported free here in Greece, while it is banned as dangerous in Denmark' (Oikonomikos Tachidromos 24/11/94), Denmark's ambassador in Athens sent a letter to the editor explaining that the bleaching agent in question was not banned due to its toxic properties but within a general framework of reducing the use of improving agents in foods.

A similar process of associating the use of chemicals with foreign products that are perceived as a threat for the purity of the nation is reported by Ohnuki-Tierney (1993) with regard to Japanese rice. Japanese rice, which embodies the land and history of Japan, has been associated with a chemical-free process of production as opposed to imported California rice, which is considered impure and a threat to the purity of the Japanese self:

> As a metaphor of self, rice paddies are our ancestral land, our village, our region, and ultimately, our land, Japan. They also represent our pristine past before modernity and foreign influences contaminated it. Rice paddies then embody Japanese space and time, that is, Japanese land and history ... The purity of white rice or 'pure rice' became a powerful metaphor for the purity of the Japanese self... While opponents emphasise the positive features of domestic rice and rice paddies, they also stress the negative aspects of California rice. A frequently voiced charge against foreign rice is the extensive use of chemicals on agricultural products in the United States ... Chemicals symbolise the impurity of foreign rice and, thus, constitute a threat to the purity of the Japanese self (1993:110-111).

After the War of Independence in the nineteenth century, the modernisation of Greece and its categorical inclusion in the countries of the West became a top priority (Jusdanis 1991). In order to have a legitimate platform for political claims, a foundation of historical justification was needed and the Greeks found it in 'glorified' classical antiquity. As Herzfeld (1982:4) expresses it, 'The concept of Hellas was already a quicksand of shifting perceptions when the modern Greeks came to it in their turn, bringing with them their specialised nationalistic concerns.' Cultural continuity from ancient times to the present is for Greece a political issue and emerges in every dispute that concerns the nation-state. Part of the process of nation-building are the notions of authenticity and purity (Williams 1989), which become particularly apparent when the nation feels threatened and in a state of struggle for recognition (Handler 1984).

Feta's registration as a PDO was an issue of great economic and political importance for Greece, which became particularly pressing as it coincided with a period of financial hardship for the farming sector. The fact that feta's registration as a Greek product was contested by other member countries of the European North triggered a nationalistic discourse around feta which paralleled the authenticity of the cheese with the authenticity of the Greek nation. Feta's white colour due to the use of sheep's milk became the cornerstone of this discourse and was associated with the whiteness and authenticity of the ancient Greek marbles. While commentators in the press were referring to the looting of Greek culture by the Europeans, the Greek state was engaged in 'cleansing' the market of feta 'imitations' and Greek tradition from impure elements.

It was mentioned earlier that, as an objectification of the Greek nation, the Acropolis acquired a sacred character and was treated with seriousness and respect. In feta's case, a similar process took place that attached to traditional Greek cheeses an aura of seriousness and contested, at least at national level, earlier associations of sheep and the rural way of life with backwardness. One interesting implication of the feta dispute was the importance that was placed on the sheep as a symbol of Greekness. What stood until then as the symbol of uncouthness and *vlakhiá*[18], was now promoted in Europe as a central element of Greekness. The paradox is incisively illustrated by a comment made by a columnist in a daily newspaper, and the criticism it received from the editor of a food review. In 1993, the columnist wrote:

> For them -our community colleagues- cars, electronics and heavy industry. For us, feta, tiróghalo (whey) and touloumotíri[19]... Each to his own. And there is no reason for us to feel ashamed... On the contrary, we are proud of it... We will make feta a national symbol, and we will put it on the 10,000 drachmas banknote which is coming out soon; on the one side 1 kg of barrel feta and on the other the bust of the goat-sheep. (Eleftheros Typos, Oct 1993)

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[18] The term *vlakhiá* derives from the ethnotic group of *Vlákhoi* (Vlachs), who used to be a semi-nomadic population living on sheep and goat shepherding. The term has long been synonymous with pastoralism in general. In the last forty years, in the context of urbanisation, it has gradually been extended to people originating from the Greek countryside, who are thought to have unrefined, 'backward' manners.

[19] Touloumotiri is a cheese ripened and preserved in skin bags.

The editor of a food review expressed his indignation at this kind of snobbism and disrespect towards Greek rural tradition and accused the columnist of journalistic irresponsibility:

> Is [the columnist] suffering from nationalist hysteria caused by her emotion for feta? Is she ashamed that the cheese makers in Dodoni happen to be her fellow-countrymen (*simpatriótes*) while she would have preferred Madam Rochard, let's say, or Baron Krupp? Would she consider it denigrating if at our ambassadors' receptions instead of caviar they offered feta and olives? Would it be a bad goal for us to set to sell our feta like the French sell their roquefort or the Dutch their gouda? (Trofima kai Pota, November 1993:13)

The dispute between the two journalists brings to the surface underlying tensions within Greek society. On the one hand, lies the ideal of Europeanisation, the project of modernisation and the big divide in the rate of development between urban and rural areas; on the other, lies the gradual blurring of boundaries between the urban and the rural (cf. Stewart 1991:126) and the upgrading of Greek rural tradition as a source of local difference within an EC context. The case of feta brings into sharp relief how a nationalistic discourse finds material expression in food. Due to its link to the special characteristics of a *tópos*, cheese constitutes a useful field for exploring how material objects are employed to support ideologies. As will become evident in the following chapters, dairy products are used as a field to negotiate the tension between modernisation and tradition in multiple contexts in Greek society. One of these contexts is the dairy manufacturing industry, to which I will now turn.

CHAPTER 2

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING DAIRY PRODUCTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 Illusions of rationality / struggles of classification

Under the influence of liberal philosophy, the individual has emerged as a symbol of a humanity which controls its own destiny. The importance assigned to the individual is that of a strategising agent who makes rational decisions; a perception of the world which Ouroussoff (1993) has called the 'illusion of rationality'. By studying one context, a multinational manufacturing company, within which the idea that individuals are in control over the future is a dominant model of thought that informs evaluations of successful performance, Ouroussoff illustrates how such evaluations do not always follow the facts, and success is attributed to those who are *believed* to be successful. As Ouroussoff contends, anthropologists have tended to reproduce the liberal myth by overlooking the need for fieldwork in the West, and especially within contexts such as commercial enterprises, where the belief that people are determining agents is at its strongest. There is certainly a need to recognise the role of culture within commercial contexts and to investigate the extent to which agents base their (economic) decisions on shared beliefs, interpretations and assumptions about the world as they experience it in their everyday life.

In recent years there has been a growing number of ethnographic studies on companies (Grafton-Small 1996; Janelli 1993; Lien 1997; Miller 1997a; Moeran 1996b; Negus 1997, see also Sherry 1995) which explore at a micro-level the way shared cultural beliefs are linked to economic behaviour. Negus, for example, indicates how the activities of staff working in the cultural industries are informed by particular sets of values, beliefs and working practices - what he calls a 'culture of production' which has a significant impact on the 'production of culture' (1997:69). This approach involves a shift from the macro to the micro, from the structures of control

to the actions of producers, and from questions of economic ownership to cultural meaning.

There has also been an increasing tendency among anthropologists to question the taken-for-granted nature of economic terms such as the market (Carrier 1997), the consumer (Lien 1997), and price (Alexander 1992) by focusing on the meaning they acquire at an everyday level. These studies disprove claims to a single truth made by economic models by showing the diversity of meaning and interpretations that economic concepts are subject to depending on context.

As Lien (1997) has demonstrated in her detailed ethnography in the marketing department of a Norwegian food manufacturing company, the language that marketers use to communicate with each other reflects their worldview, i.e. their assumptions and beliefs about the world around them, which are incorporated in their actions and are materialised through their decisions. As Lien states, the way her informants talked about the market indicates 'meanings and connotations that reach far beyond the definition of a marketing textbook' (1997:89). Marketing language is a type of language that can be investigated in its own right and like all languages, it constitutes a frame of thought, both enabling and constraining. Market metaphors such as territory, battlefield, environment of natural selection, transformation and flux, are deployed in everyday discussions and constitute an integral part of the marketing cosmology. The market here is a social product that is created, shaped, and culturally constructed in such a way that it serves the needs of a marketing department.

Ethnographic observation of how managers experience everyday life throws light on ways in which culture and shared philosophical beliefs within an enterprising context shape interpretations and are embodied in strategies and decisions. Strategy, after all, involves a high degree of interpretation; it is a way of envisioning how the world could be or ought to be (Schoenberger 1994). Such envisioning is dependent on the viewer's perspective and social position. Social position shapes interpretations inasmuch as it is created through them. An explanation of how this cultural mechanism operates is given by Bourdieu. According to the position of the individual within a social structure (or more specifically a firm), the hierarchy of

values varies. Each group within a firm (be it engineers or marketers) is confronted with a different reality, and feels equipped to fulfil different needs. Each group seeks, therefore, to promote its own interests by imposing its own scale of values. Bourdieu calls this process 'classification struggle':

> The classification struggle which is waged initially within firms, a struggle for supremacy between production and publicity, between engineering and marketing, in which each category of managers seeks to advance its occupational interests by imposing a scale of values which sets at the top of the hierarchy the functions for which it feels itself best equipped, and all the similar struggles which are fought out within the dominant fraction of the dominant class, are inseparable from conflicts of values which involve the participants' whole world views and arts of living, because they oppose ... ultimate differences in habitus (Bourdieu 1992:309-310)

In this chapter, my intention is to explore marketing strategies and the hierarchy of values they seek to promote. Interpretations of competitive structures, of the company's role, of consumers, and of the commodity itself create for marketers a reality within which strategies are formed and decisions are taken. In the first part of the chapter I will show how cultural categories such as tradition are redefined through marketing practice according to a set of values that serves the needs and worldview of the companies. The second part highlights how understandings by the Greek manufacturing industry of their leading role in the country's development and modernisation find expression in marketing and advertising campaigns for milk. The third part provides an explicit example of how the design of marketing campaigns can sometimes be better understood in terms of 'the culture of production' rather than in terms of consumer needs. Finally, the last part is focused on the construction of relationships between company, brand and consumer, based on the notions of care and love.

2.1.2 Introducing the dairy companies

Information on the dairy companies and the dairy market in Greece (such as statistics on turnover, financial structure, market shares and marketing strategies) are provided throughout the thesis in relation to the material presented. Here, as an introductory note, I will give a brief outline of the main dairy players at a national level, as they emerged from the first decades of the century until the end of the 1990s.

The first dairy factory in Greece was constructed on the outskirts of Athens in the 1930s by the company EVGA. EVGA was the first company with industrial installations to pasteurise and bottle milk. Apart from EVGA's pasteurised milk, the only other industrially produced milk that circulated in the market before the Second World War was Nestlé's sweetened condensed milk in tins. After the War, Nestlé introduced a new technological innovation, unsweetened evaporated milk. Nestlé did not remain long without competitors. In 1951 the Dutch company FRIESLAND launched the evaporated milk brand NOUNOU, and gradually became market leader- a position they have retained through the decades to the present. What is more, from the 1950s until well into the 1980s, evaporated milk was the most popular type of milk among Greek consumers.

In the 1950s and 1960s, while the popularity of imported evaporated milk kept increasing, EVGA remained by far the most organised Greek dairy company with the biggest sales network. However, at the beginning of the 1970s EVGA entered into financial difficulty due to bad management and finally closed down in 1973 as its sales network was gradually taken over by the young dairy company DELTA. After EVGA's closure and for almost two decades, DELTA almost monopolised the market for pasteurised milk; the company still holds a leading position in this market, although its share has declined comparatively, due to increased competition in the 1990s. At the end of the 1980s, by providing refrigerating facilities to corner shops in Athens, DELTA facilitated consumer access to pasteurised milk and put an end to the dominance of evaporated milk.

Whereas DELTA was strengthening its position in Athens as the leader in the market for fresh pasteurised milk and was gradually spreading to other parts of the country, another Greek company, also based in Athens, was doing the same with yoghurt. FAGE launched their first mass-produced branded yoghurt in 1974. Following a course of rapid development and expanding their distribution network inside and outside the country, the company grew to the most significant yoghurt manufacturer in Greece. The Filippou brothers, owners and chief executives of FAGE, succeeded in acquiring control of the bankrupt EVGA, which as part of the Filippou Group, resumed milk production in 1990. When this attempt failed a

couple of years later, EVGA's 60-year-history as a milk manufacturing company came to an end[20]. Whereas part of the EVGA factory was converted for the production of fruit juice, FAGE decided to make a dynamic entry into the milk market with its own corporate brand. FAGE MILK, which was launched in 1993, caused a considerable reduction in DELTA's market share and established FAGE among the main milk manufacturers of the country. In response to FAGE's entry into the milk market, one year later and with a brand new yoghurt factory, DELTA made its first significant launch in yoghurt and started on its course towards becoming a serious player in the yoghurt market nation-wide. FAGE, on the other hand, after completing the campaign for the introduction of FAGE MILK, shifted their focus to the production of branded cheese- a yet untrodden ground for the national dairy manufacturing industry. Cheese production was mostly locally-oriented, with only a few dairy companies having the capacity for larger production and a wider distribution network.

In the northern parts of Greece, where most of the country's milk of the country is produced, the most important dairy manufacturer has been the farmers' co-operative AGNO. However, in the 1990s, AGNO's leading position suffered repeated blows as competition increased, and the company, facing serious managerial problems, was finally bought out by the Agricultural Bank of Greece. While AGNO had a very low market share in the Athenian market, the Athenian companies, DELTA and FAGE, have been systematically increasing their penetration in the northern Greek market. Their main northern Greek opponent is the young and dynamic company MEVGAL, which was founded in 1983 and has already become the third biggest dairy manufacturer in the country. Involved in the production of milk, yoghurt and branded cheese, MEVGAL managed to acquire a considerable share in the Athenian market in all these products, and especially in cheese and milk.

In the 1990s, the three Greek companies FAGE, DELTA and MEVGAL emerged as the three most important players of the dairy manufacturing sector, expanding both geographically to the north and the south, and in all main categories of dairy

[20] EVGA was the first ice-cream manufacturer and today EVGA ice-cream is still among the leading brands.

products (milk, yoghurt and cheese). Although FRIESLAND -leader in evaporated milk- kept losing market share due to the increased popularity of fresh pasteurised milk and the proliferation of evaporated milk brands, many of them retail-labels, they managed to retain first place in total sales of milk through two strategic moves and technological innovations. Their strategy was to focus on the child and to introduce the concept of enriched evaporated milk for toddlers and young children. Furthermore, in 1996, they innovated again by introducing an entirely new category of milk, which they called 'fridge milk' (*ghála psigheíou*) designed to be consumed within forty days, if kept refrigerated. The purpose of 'fridge milk' was to extract market share from fresh pasteurised milk as a milk that needs refrigeration (as fresh milk does) but has a longer life span. FRIESLAND's move was soon followed by FAGE, which managed in this way to increase its total market share in milk.

In this chapter, my focus will be on the biggest dairy companies in Greece, and in particular on FAGE, DELTA and FRIESLAND, with occasional references to Nestlé and MEVGAL. In later chapters, reference will be made to other companies as well. The ethnographic material presented here refers to the marketing and advertising of milk, yoghurt and branded cheese. As none of the big dairy producers are involved in the manufacturing and marketing of butter, there are no references to butter in this chapter.

2.2 *PART ONE*

Notions of Tradition and Modernity in Milk and Yoghurt Manufacturing

2.2.1 The first cows in Athens

Literary accounts of the late 19th and early 20th century Athens refer to the first cows that were imported to the capital as a symbol of modernisation. Swiss cows of 'the finest breed' were imported from 'Europe' and were considered to be part of the civilising project which aimed at bringing Greece closer to 'European civilisation'. These cows were bought for enterprising purposes for the production and retail sale of milk and milk products, among which yoghurt, (custard) cream and rice-pudding were the most common. A literary reference to a historical site of Athens includes information about a cowshed/milk shop of this kind, well-known among Athenians in the 1920s:

> Around 1925, opposite the Stadium [...] was situated a cowshed-milk shop which offered to the customers pure milk, rice-pudding and cremes. On order, the milk was taken directly from the cows. The cowshed in Zappeio belonged to Dimitrios Soutsos who had come to Greece from Romania. When he came here, he bought a big plot of land in Likovrissi, and later he built this innovative milk shop in Zappeio that he named 'Cows' (*Agheládhes*), because next to it was the barn with the Swiss cows, which supplied him with the product that made his cowshed famous. All the Athenians of the time passed outside the small doors and watched Soutsos' cows while they were chewing their food, each one having her name calligraphically written. (Zappeio 1988:66)

References to milk shops are also present in a book by Kairofilas (1983) entitled 'Athens in the Belle-Époque', in which the author describes how the oldest among the cow-breeders in Athens, Chrysakis, imported a fine breed of cows from Switzerland, introducing at the same time 'civilised' European manners in his 'English-style' milk shop:

> Chrysakis, the oldest of the cow-breeders (*agheladhotrófon*) is praised by the press for the tidiness and cleanliness of his milk shop (*ghalaktopoleío*), which bears the title 'Five o' Clock' (*Fáiv Oklók*). His cowshed (*voustásio*) is situated behind the military hospital, under the Acropolis, in the area that is now called Makriyanni, while his milk shop operates in Fillelinon street and is regarded as the only English-style (*angloidhés*) shop of Athens.
> Chrysakis started his business in 1884 with five cows and in 1900 he already had forty cows of the Schwitz breed, of the renowned

> Swiss province, where the most celebrated cows are bred. From this cowshed many Greeks from Sterea and the Peloponnese acquire offspring of this fine breed. His milk shop is widely discussed, because Chrysakis is regarded as the introducer of a new social culture (*koinoniko úpolitismo ú*)[21], as he founded a salon in Athenian society. In this salon, the newspapers write, 'one learns to behave with decency, to respect others, to take off his hat on entry (*na apokalíptetai eiserkhómenos*)[22], to respect the ladies, even to restrain his urge to smoke (1983:103).

The need to become 'civilised' (*politisménos*) pervaded everyday discourse in Athens in the 1920s and 1930s, and it is also manifested in the way newspapers of the time presented the construction of the first dairy factory. In 1934, the first dairy factory was built by two Greek-American businessmen, the Sourapas brothers. They founded EVGA, which stood for Ethnikí Viomikhanía Ghálaktos (National Industry of Milk), which in the years of the Metaxa dictatorship (1936-41) was to be renamed Ellinikí Viomikhanía Ghálaktos (Greek Milk Industry). The plant was built in Votanikos, an area in what was then the outskirts of Athens. The new factory became a source of enthusiasm and featured in the press as 'an industrial miracle':

> Breath of supreme civilisation (*politismós*)[23]. It is strongly reminiscent of Sweden. It is vast, surrounded by a wide garden. It is meant to be a factory; nevertheless, it gives the impression of a huge laboratory for scientific research. (From the newspaper Ethnos mentioned in Galaktokomia 1992:77)

EVGA remained the only producer of pasteurised milk in Athens until the 1960s. In 1964, the company introduced a technological innovation: the plastic bottle. EVGA proudly advertised the new disposable bottle with the phrase 'New "civilising" contribution by EVGA. EVGA: civilisation in food' (*NEA PROSFORA POLITISMOU tis EVGA. EVGA: o politismós stin dhiatrofí*):

> EVGA's new plastic bottles, hermetically sealed with an aluminium stopper, and specially processed, ensure ideal cleanliness. After milk is removed, the plastic bottles are not returned. Each time you have a new plastic bottle. In this way, you are spared the trouble of having to return them as well as the danger of breakage (EVGA advertisement 1964, see Papapolyzos and Martzoukos 1996:115)

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[21] The word *politismós* has a broad meaning in Greek and may refer both to 'civilisation' and 'culture' (cf. Tziovas 1989; Just 1995).

[22] Lit. to uncover/reveal himself on entry.

[23] Again here the word *politismós* could also be translated as 'culture'.

For most of the 20th century, any sign of change that was perceived as progress and development would be incorporated into the discourse of 'civilising' the nation. Imports of cows and the production of dairy products based on cow's milk were once part of this discourse, as Greek shepherds were mostly involved in the breeding of sheep and goats, and cows suitable for milk-production were few and in the main imported. Through the industrialisation and intensification of milk production, the cow was incorporated into the economy and culture, to the extent that today it is not easy to find sheep or goat's milk in the city. Yoghurt made from (un-homogenised) sheep's milk is easier to find, as it is usually available at supermarkets in clay or plastic pots, occupying a small section on the shelves. Almost all the space now allocated to yoghurt in the supermarket accommodates yoghurt pots manufactured by the big dairy manufacturers, all of which -with only one exception- are made from cow's milk.

2.2.2 Manufacturing dairy products

I will now present the main principles according to which the big dairy companies have structured the markets of milk, yoghurt and packaged cheese. I will return again to the structuring principles in the next chapter, where I will discuss how dairy products are categorised and displayed on supermarket shelves. Here, the focus will be on the way dairy companies are involved in the materialisation and definition of cultural categories, such as the traditional and the modern, through the manufacturing of dairy products. Companies categorise and manage their dairy products according to certain principles, to the presentation of which I will now turn.

Starting with milk, the most basic distinction that shapes marketing strategies is the type of milk. During fieldwork (1996-7), the leading type was pasteurised milk, most commonly known as fresh milk[24]. Pasteurised milk had a market share of around

[24] It should be noted that due to the segmentation of the market into foreign companies selling evaporated milk and Greek companies selling (fresh) pasteurized milk, there is controversy about the use of the word 'fresh'; the former argue that according to the legislation 'fresh milk' refers to milk that has not undergone pasteurization or other kinds of processing. Therefore, it is claimed that the designation 'fresh' for pasteurized milk is used by the pasteurized-milk companies in order to create an impression and does not correspond to legal designations.

60%[25] and the trend was upward. Second came evaporated milk with an amazing market share of approximately 35%. In comparison with other European countries this is an extremely high figure; in northern Europe evaporated milk does not account for more then 3% of total milk consumption. On the other hand, UHT milk, also known as long-life milk, which has a high market share in most northern European countries (almost 85% in Belgium), in Greece is around 3%. There are mainly historical reasons that account for this phenomenon, which have partly to do with the late development of the Greek dairy industry and the early penetration of foreign multinationals.

A new category of milk that was introduced in 1996 by FRIESLAND and which has been steadily gaining market share ever since, is the so-called milk of high pasteurisation (*ghála ipsilís pasteríosis*) or, as FRIESLAND called it, 'fridge milk' (*ghála psigheíou*). This type of milk was presented as a technological innovation, which enabled milk to last forty days in the fridge (thirty days without refrigeration). In this new milk category, FAGE soon followed FRIESLAND, transcending for the first time the clear-cut segmentation of the milk market between evaporated and fresh, foreign and Greek companies[26].

The market leader and main innovator in evaporated milk is FRIESLAND, which is followed and imitated by the other companies. Evaporated milk is available full-fat and reduced-fat, or 'light' as it is known in Greece. In order to maintain the falling market share of evaporated milk, FRIESLAND has in recent years focused more intensively on children and has introduced two enriched evaporated milks for children of younger age, a move also followed by its competitors. So, the most central tendency that has emerged from the marketing of evaporated milk is a

[25] There is a geographical variation in market share (e.g. the market share of evaporated milk was slightly higher in rural areas), but I am more concerned with overall tendencies.

[26] For reasons of simplification, I refer to the evaporated-milk companies as foreign and to the pasteurized-milk companies as Greek. The facts are a bit more complex than this straightforward distinction allows for. The two most important brands in evaporated milk belong to the companies FRIESLAND HELLAS and NESTLE/LOUMIDIS. The main difference between the two is that FRIESLAND only trades (imports and sells) evaporated milk, while NESTLE/LOUMIDIS have their own factory in Central Greece where they produce evaporated milk. They are, therefore, members of the Greek Dairy Industry Association (SEVGAP). At the same time, the Greek companies are not entirely Greek either. For example, 20% of DELTA's shares are owned by DANONE. Still, until 1996 there was a clear-cut segmentation of the milk market based on the type of milk, which also corresponded to the origins (foreign or Greek) of the companies.

market segmentation based on age: enriched milk for the very young, full-fat evaporated milk for children and light evaporated milk for adults.

In the marketing of fresh pasteurised milk, the companies have focused primarily on fat content, where the main categories are full-fat (*plíres*), semi-skimmed (*elafrí*, lit. light) and skimmed or 'zero per cent' (*midhén tis ekató*). Milks are also categorised according to carton size, ranging from a half litre to one litre and two litres.

The marketing of pasteurised milk is characterised by the fact that milks are not given special brand names but carry the corporate brand name, i.e. the name of the company. As a marketer explained, 'Milk is milk. For the whole family. For everybody'. The leader in the market is DELTA, followed by FAGE and MEVGAL. Inscribed on the cartons is usually the company's logo followed by the designation 'Fresh milk' (*frésko ghála*) and the fat category (*plíres, elafrí, 0%*). As a rule the type of milk and the fat content are written in Greek. But, as we shall see, this is not always the case.

There is one exception where milks are given special brand names, and that is chocolate milk. In terms of the marketing strategy followed by all the companies, chocolate milk is targeted at teenagers. Chocolate milk was the only flavoured (coloured) milk that circulated in the market during my fieldwork[27]. The way chocolate milk has been marketed corresponds to an entirely different concept from that promoted in the case of white milk. To start with, chocolate milks have foreign brand names that connote fun and pleasure. For example, the leader is DELTA's MILKO. FAGE's product is called N'JOY, with obvious connotations. DODONI, a dairy company situated in NW Greece which has widely used the concepts of tradition and authenticity in their marketing campaigns, have named all their products with Greek names except for chocolate milk which they call DONI (in Latin letters).

Chocolate milk is intended for fun and not as part of an everyday diet. Marketers follow an aesthetic code through which such messages are conveyed. Apart from the

[27] Today, other flavours such as banana or strawberry have become available but their target group is mainly children.

interchange between Greek and foreign brand names, another technique is the realistic depiction of animals on the packaging. FAGE, for example, has systematically followed these two techniques- Greek brand name and realistic depiction- to draw the line between the 'traditional' and the 'modern'. In 1993 when FAGE launched their first milk, the marketing strategy focused on the concept of a modern company introducing a modern milk. The milk marketing manager chose for the packaging an abstract drawing of two cow heads which he explained was a big asset for the new product; it emphasised its 'modern' character as it was juxtaposed to the classic realistic design of the milk cartons that circulated in the market at the time. One year later, FAGE launched packaged feta. With feta, the cheese manager followed the opposite strategy, and chose for the package design a realistic depiction of sheep. As she explained, in the case of feta, the traditional Greek cheese par excellence, the company had to suppress their modern image and convince the consumer that they had respectfully followed traditional ways of production. Feta was not a product that one could play around with abstract drawings of sheep which connoted a lack of seriousness.

Similar distinctions are also made in yoghurts. There is a code that separates the yoghurts intended for everyday diet from the yoghurts intended for desserts. There are yoghurts that are vested with an air of seriousness and others that are intended for pleasure. There are yoghurts that are marketed as traditional and others that are marketed as modern. As cultural concepts, tradition and modernity are negotiated through marketing practice and are promoted in a way that accords with the point of view of the manufacturers. As I will try to show, the boundary between the modern and the traditional is drawn in such a way that it creates space for the dairy companies and legitimises their role as agents of modernisation.

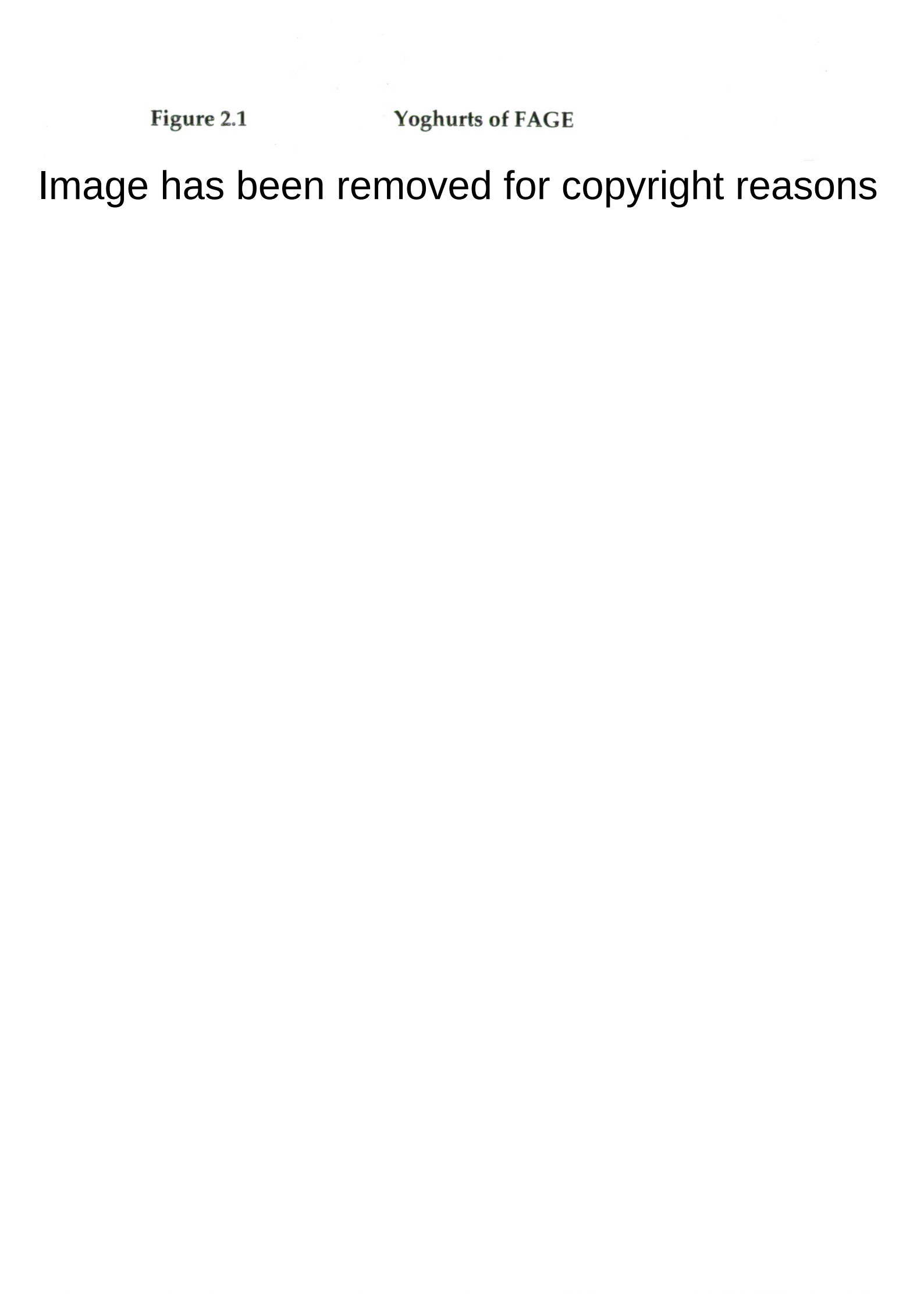
What is marketed as traditional or modern varies according to the product. In the previous section, I discussed how at the beginning of the century the cow stood as a symbol for progress and access to European 'civilisation'. However, by the end of the century and within the context of dairy industrial manufacturing, the origin of the milk (i.e. sheep or cow) is considerably down-played and is not an important issue in the distinction between milks. In milks, low fat content or the technology of the carton lid have been much more important factors in denoting modernity than

the use of cow's milk. In yoghurt, there is a distinction between cow and sheep milk, but the distinction is marginal. In contrast, in the case of cheese, the origin of milk and the distinction between sheep and cow acquires primary importance and constitutes the central principle according to which cheeses are categorised.

As I mentioned earlier, the big dairy manufacturers produce yoghurt almost exclusively from cow's milk and the distinction between sheep and cow is marginalised. FAGE produce only one yoghurt made from sheep's milk which they call PROVATAKI (lit. little sheep), which is made from sheep's milk with the addition of cow's milk to make it sweeter. What is characteristic about this product is that it has a Greek brand name which makes direct reference to the animal. Also, the aluminium lid of the pot contains a realistic drawing of a sheep (Figure 2.1a). FAGE is the leader in the yoghurt market and the company that mostly sets the structures within which competition takes place. Browsing through its yoghurts, there is only one other yoghurt that shares many common characteristics with PROVATAKI in the way it is marketed: AGELADITSA, which literary means 'little cow', is one of FAGE's strongest brands. AGELADITSA is a Greek brand name and has a realistic depiction of a cow on its packaging (Figure 2.1b). More than that, the 'little cow' and the 'little sheep' have in common the fact that they are categories on their own and they are not part of a product line. What this means is that companies normally produce product lines (e.g. the same type of yoghurt in different flavours. FAGE's strained yoghurt brand TOTAL (Figure 2.1c), for example, comprises a whole family of yoghurts of different fat content and fruit flavours. The brands PROVATAKI and AGELADITSA do not have fat content variations or flavour variations. It is revealing that AGELADITSA, which is a white set[28] yoghurt of 3,85% fat content, comes in reduced fat variations but with a different brand name - SILOUET (Figure 2.1d), which is promoted as an entirely separate product.

[28] Set yoghurt is the yoghurt that matures in the pot and forms a glossy surface. It contrasts with strained yoghurt, which is put in the pot after it matures, and stirred yoghurt, which refers to the case where pieces of fruit or cereals are added to the yoghurt. Not all fruit yoghurts are stirred with pieces of fruit. There are also set fruit yoghurts, in which fruit juice is added before the yoghurt matures in the pot and forms the glossy surface.

Figure 2.1 **Yoghurts of FAGE**



To conclude, PROVATAKI and AGELADITSA are the only FAGE yoghurts with Greek brand names, with a realistic depiction of the animal on their packaging, and which do not come out in fat or flavour variations. All the other yoghurts have foreign brand names (TOTAL, VELOUTE, SILOUET, VELOUTELA, FRU-YO and so on), and colourful pots with abstract designs and they form groups under the same brand name (Figure 2.2). DELTA do not produce any sheep yoghurts. MEVGAL have a white set 3,85% fat cow yoghurt brand named AGELADAS (lit. of cow) and during fieldwork they also produced a sheep yoghurt brand named PROVEIO (lit. of sheep). These were the only MEVGAL yoghurts with Greek names while the rest had foreign brand names such as HARMONY, ONLY 2%, FREE 0%, FITLINE, DUETTINO, BEAUTIFUL and so on (Figure 2.3). Later, MEVGAL also launched two yoghurts under the Greek brand name PARADOSIAKO (lit. traditional) which are made from un-homogenised milk. One yoghurt is made from cow's milk and is called PARADOSIAKO AGELADOS (lit. traditional of cow) and the other is made from sheep's milk and is called PARADOSIAKO PROVEIO (lit. traditional of sheep). In this way, MEVGAL draw a distinction between sheep and cow but both categories were characterised as 'traditional'.

As fresh white milk was marketed in a more 'serious' way than chocolate milk, the same happened with yoghurt. According to FAGE, PROVATAKI and AGELADITSA are 'standard' yoghurts in the sense that they are as minimally processed as possible. They are not fat reduced or fat enriched, they are white, and have no additives such as fruit flavours. The role of the company in their production is conceptualised as minimal. They are, therefore, communicated with the language of the 'traditional', which is here defined as what existed before industrial technology took over. The company's role as moderniser is achieved through the production of yoghurts of reduced fat, or fruit flavours, or any other combinations that have become possible through advanced technology in yoghurt production. From this perspective, the 'standard' sheep's yoghurt and the 'standard' cow's yoghurt fall into the same category, the 'traditional', as opposed to the rest of the yoghurts, which with their fancy names and pot designs represent the 'modern'. So, whereas in other contexts, a sheep's yoghurt and a cow's yoghurt could represent two different worlds, within the context of yoghurt manufacturing they are both grouped into the category of the traditional.

Figure 2.2 Products of FAGE

Figure 2.3 Yoghurts of MEVGAL

I have discussed how cultural categories such as seriousness and pleasure, tradition and modernity have been negotiated through the production of milk and yoghurt. I here argued that in both products the concepts of seriousness and tradition are associated with the colour white, Greek brand names and realistic package design, whereas modernity and fun/pleasure are expressed through colourful packaging, foreign brand names and an abstract design. Through this code, distinctions between cows and sheep, which have deep roots in Greek culture and economy, are re-contextualised, and either lose their significance as symbols of the tradition/modernity opposition (as in the case of milk) or have their importance significantly downplayed (as in the case of yoghurt). I will now turn to cheese, which, caught as it is within the webs of European regulations and appellations of origin, has a different history from the other dairy products. In the case of cheese, the origin of the milk (cow or sheep) becomes the decisive factor in its designation as modern or traditional, playful or serious.

Cheese is a food which is resistant to branding (Polla 1994) as it is more associated with geographical areas and cheese-making cultures than with particular manufacturers. In the next chapter, I discuss cheese branding from the perspective of power relations between manufacturers and retailers. Here, my focus will be on one company and their cheese marketing strategy with regard to the use of the traditional/modern opposition.

I will focus on FAGE because it was the first big dairy manufacturer to enter the market of branded cheese. Prior to FAGE, smaller companies such as KOLIOS had taken the first step, but it was only after FAGE's entrance and intensive advertising that there was a substantial boost in the promotion of branded cheese by Greek manufacturers.

FAGE started the production of cheese in a period when uncertainty and confusion in the cheese sector was setting in, caused by developments in the EU concerning the regulation on agricultural products of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). Already, in 1989, FAGE had initiated the production of a cow's-milk 'kaseri' in a cheese dairy in central Greece, and was importing a cow's-milk 'graviera' from Germany. When in 1994 the legislation about the specifications of Greek traditional

cheeses took force, the use of cow's milk for the production of feta, kaseri, kefalotiri, and graviera[29], among other traditional cheeses, was prohibited. FAGE could no longer use words such as 'kaseri' on the packaging of their cheese made from cow's milk. The company not only accommodated the change of legislation but, through their marketing strategy, they emphasised the sheep/cow issue even more. In terms of marketing strategy the cheeses were differently related to the traditional/modern distinction, forming a continuum from the more modern to the less modern and the traditional.

On the most modern side were products such as cottage cheese and cheese spread. Cottage cheese, which as a category had low penetration in the Greek market, was produced in Greece from cow's milk but was given a foreign brand name: FLAIR. Although it was not advertised much, its advertising was related to women, food temptation, and weight reduction. The cheese spread was named NEW YORK as a response to KRAFT's PHILADELPHIA.

Less modern cheeses but still on the modern side were products that were made from cow's milk but which, due to Greek legislation, could not bear the names of traditional Greek cheeses. The kaseri-type and graviera-type cheeses mentioned earlier belong to this category. These cheeses have their own brand name which, unlike the more modern category, is in Greek and was chosen to connote a geographical area. The kaseri-type is called TRIKALINO, literally from Trikala, which refers to the area where the cheese dairy is situated. The graviera-type cheese imported from Germany was brand named PLAGIA (lit. slope). As the story goes, the brand name initially chosen was GRAVIA, which has strong connotations with Greek tradition and rural locality. However, it turned out that a Greek village under that name already existed and so the company had to change it.

The advertisements of TRIKALINO and PLAGIA are focused on pleasure. The former is presented by a comedian, the latter by a model preparing dinner to seduce her male guest. According to the advertiser:

[29] The only graviera made from cow's milk is the graviera of Naxos.

> PLAGIA is a cheese with many uses; emphasis is placed on the modern- it is after all a new cheese, and it is packaged. In the film, we used a sensual hint so that it escapes from the usual family context towards something more youthful.
> PLAGIA and TRIKALINO follow the same code. The adverts are product-oriented (*proiontikés*) and they show different uses of the cheeses. They are designed to meet the needs of a contemporary family. These cheeses have no personality. The kitchen will impose its needs on them, not they on the kitchen.

If the adverts for PLAGIA and TRIKALINO were playful and modern, this was not the case with the last category of cheeses, the traditional. Here a more serious tone prevails and special emphasis is given to the concept 'respect for tradition'. The company seeks ways to convince the Greek consumer that technology and tradition can successfully merge. As an advertiser put it,

> When you package a traditional cheese you touch very sensitive chords. The Greeks are not used to commercialised cheese. Many of them get olive oil from their kin- no matter what you tell them, they still believe that this is the best oil, despite the efforts of ELAIS[30] to carefully select the oil. There is a difference from the other Europeans. The English are not so close to home-produced products as to show distrust to newly commercialised products.

When FAGE launched feta in 1995, no special brand name was used and the product was called feta FAGE. The design of the packaging was a realistic depiction of sheep, and the advert, which was intensively shown on TV, comprised images of industrial installations, cheese dairies and ways of manufacturing. While in the previous category, the focus of the advertisements was on the consumption of the cheese, here the emphasis was on production. The voice-over in feta's advertisement reveals how the company tried to accommodate the concept of modernisation with tradition:

> Nothing is left to chance. We set as a high goal the production of the most tasty feta, traditional feta. And that was what we did: we followed the path of tradition. We modernised traditional dairies. We used 100% fresh, Greek, sheep and goat's milk. Knowing the secrets of taste, we relied on people's love for their work (*sto meráki ton anthrópon*). There we added with discretion FAGE's know-how so that you can always enjoy stable quality and taste. Feta FAGE: with respect for tradition.

[30] ELAIS is the biggest oil products company in Greece

The first part of the advertisement ['nothing is left to chance... we set as a high goal...'] shows images of FAGE's factory and industrial installations. In the second part ['we followed the path of tradition...'] we are transferred from the factory to a rural landscape. We are taken inside a cheese dairy where feta is produced.

In the same year, one more traditional Greek cheese was launched by FAGE, following very much the same marketing concept as feta: Cretan Graviera (graviera Kritis). Like feta, graviera Kritis was promoted as a corporate brand and, even more than feta, the place of manufacture was depicted as authentically as possible. The characters featured in the advertisement were real characters, Cretans actually involved in the cheese dairy, wearing their traditional costumes and speaking the local idiom.

Within the context of manufacturing, cultural concepts such as tradition and modernity get redefined and negotiated and associated with new elements of the material world. The example I presented addressed this cultural opposition within the context of marketing and in relation to three different dairy products. I showed how the association of cow with progress and 'civilisation', and sheep with tradition and 'backwardness', which prevailed at the beginning of the century, changed in the case of industrially produced milk and yoghurt and was emphasised only in cheese as a result of the EC regulation. These cultural processes do not take place separately from economic and political concerns but, as I tried to show, are directly related in a dynamic way to global regulations, legislation and economic interests.

2.3 *PART TWO*

A Representation of Modernisation in Milk Advertising

2.3.1 Introduction

In the previous section I discussed how dairy companies, FAGE in particular, have provided definitions of the modern and the traditional through the production of yoghurt and cheese. In this section, I will concentrate on evaporated and fresh milk. I will explore how the dairy companies through intensive advertising in the 1980s and the 1990s have drawn on and represented a discourse on Greek modernisation. It will be argued that milk as a commodity was caught within structures of industrial competition which resulted in the association of fresh milk not with images of 'nature' as one would normally expect, but with images of 'modernisation' such as industrial installations and advanced technology.

My focus will be on TV advertisements that appeared in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. The emphasis will be primarily on the content of the adverts which will be analysed with respect to relations of competition, wider advertising campaigns and marketing strategies. References to the structure of signs in the adverts and to the way adverts incorporate other referent systems and ideologies (Barthes 1973; Williamson 1978; Dyer 1982) will also be included, but my main focus will be on adverts in relation to the intentions of marketers and advertisers which make sense within a certain politico-economic framework. The trap of semiotic interpretation is that it is based on the assumption that both producers and consumers read the ads in the same way that semiologists do. A semiotic interpretation can only be really effective when it considers wider advertising and sales campaigns, marketing aims and strategies and the social processes and negotiations that take place during the creation of an advert (Moeran 1996a:78; 1993).

Approaches to advertisements have varied over the decades, from a functionalist perspective that privileges their information role, and the semiotic approach of the sixties and seventies according to which advertisers 'are selling us ourselves' (Williamson 1978:13), to more dynamic approaches that consider the politico-

economic framework within which adverts are created (Schudson 1984; Miller 1997a).

The rise of semiotic approaches to advertising led to an understanding of the symbolic meaning of the object independently from its material nature. The assumed separation between the object and its image is expressed in the belief that advertisers can take any commodity, infuse it with whatever meaning they wish independently from its material properties, and persuade the consumer to buy it. Against this tradition of thought, Hennion and Meadel (1989) argue that a shift has taken place from 'a model where there was the product on the one side and its propaganda on the other, to a model where it is no longer possible to draw a distinction between the technical characteristics of the product and its signifying character' (1989:199). According to the authors, the object to be advertised (or marketed) is not just a thing but more a thing for a person. It is 'a technical product and a product which communicates, a product that fulfils a need if it knows how to create a needer. And not in two successive phases, but more and more as a single, unified collective process' (ibid.). Advertising as practice involves the evolution and evaluation of the product by several actors at several nodes through which the product passes in its career. The product becomes transformed in this process as it incorporates several 'localised' interpretations both of its technical characteristics and of an integrated definition of its meaning for the buyer.

In what follows, advertisements are seen as a representation of social reality and an expression of a particular perspective which refers to social reality inasmuch as it is affected by it (Giaccardi 1995). While drawing on shared repertoires of contents and forms, advertisements also reinforce certain perceptions of reality. Schudson (1984) sees advertising as 'a set of aesthetic conventions', which he calls capitalist realism, and which refers to a symbolic system linked with the political economy whose values adverts celebrate and promote. He maintains that adverts should be interpreted within their social contexts and that 'studies that examine the symbols alone can make vital contributions but take the risk of sociological irrelevance if they do not consider the intentions of the symbol makers or the meanings that the audiences actually take from the cultural products in question' (1984:12).

For Schudson, advertising constitutes an articulation of values, a materialisation of a way of experiencing that goes hand in hand with the social situation and the dominant values within the sphere of production. He also argues that advertisements have less to do with convincing consumers than they have to do with convincing producers of the prosperity of a company. Advertising is an index of a prosperous company, which helps make the company prosperous:

> A marketing executive at a major food company told me he thinks most of the money spent by his own company on advertising does little good in convincing consumers of anything. However, he has failed in efforts to limit the advertising budget. Why? His explanation is that when the company executives make presentations before meetings of their stockholders or others in the investment community, the first thing investors want to see is a reel of the company's television advertisements. Expensive, well-executed, and familiar ads convince investors, as nothing in the black and white tables of assets and debits can, that the company is important and prosperous. (1984:xiv)

According to Schudson's perspective, there is a self-fulfilling prophesy involved in the practice of advertising; advertising facilitates the work of salespeople in their communication with retailers, with the result that widely advertised brands become the brands most widely available. It is entirely plausible that advertising helps sell goods even if it never persuades a consumer of anything (1984:xv). A similar approach is also taken by Miller, who situates advertising within the framework of the advertising industry, that is, 'a highly competitive set of firms whose primary orientation turns out to be - not the consumer, but, - their rivals' (1997a:7).

Milk advertisements, studied in their socio-economic context and within the competitive framework in which they are produced, talk about the larger cultural projects in a society as much as they talk about milk. Focusing on milk advertisements that appeared on Greek television during the decade 1986-1996, my aim is to explore the way advertising materialises the cultural tensions brought about by modernisation in Greece. Taking as a starting point the language of technological development and scientific progress employed in the advertisements of the imported evaporated milk, I will demonstrate the way local pasteurised milk manufacturers responded to the image of 'imported modernisation'. From the time that pasteurised milk first appeared on television in 1987 and in the decade that

followed afterwards, DELTA, the leading company in pasteurised milk in Athens, launched four advertising campaigns. All of them comment on the issue of modernisation and the identity of the Greek nation.

2.3.2 Evaporated milk advertisements

Before the Second World War the only packaged milk that circulated in the Greek market was Nestlé's sweetened condensed milk. The milk was advertised as a source of health and strength for children. In their search for the Greek equivalent of 'the milkmaid', Nestlé's marketers thought of the Vlachs, the pastoral nomadic people of central Greece. The milk was named GALA VLACHAS (the milk of the she-Vlach), a brand well-known today in Greece. After the War in 1951, the first evaporated milk made its entrance in the Greek market. Friesland Dairy Foods introduced 'La NOUNOU'[31], which together with GALA VLACHAS-evaporated became the most important evaporated milk brands in Greece (with NOUNOU being the leader).

In the 1960s, NOUNOU was widely advertised in magazines and newspapers mostly through too. Consumers were informed that NOUNOU was a full-cream milk that ensures good health for the children and is easily accessible at any grocer's. Besides children, NOUNOU's target group became the whole family as evaporated milk was marketed along with cooking recipes. One of the prominent slogans of NOUNOU throughout the decades was 'Fresher than the fresh. NOUNOU milk, for ever fresh', which was hinting at the comparatively 'fresher' qualities of liquid milk as opposed to milk powder. According to another interpretation, evaporated milk was 'fresher' even compared to pasteurised milk because it could maintain its freshness for a longer period of time. This is one example of the first NOUNOU adverts that appeared on Greek TV:

Woman (in her thirties, in the kitchen stirring):
Father! Father!
Father (reading newspaper in the living-room):
One can not even read! Yes?
Woman: Have you seen a tin of NOUNOU?

[31] 'La nounou' in French is short for 'la nourrice', the woman who breastfeeds other babies, a child minder, nanny or wet-nurse.

Father: A tin of what?
W: A tin of NOUNOU.
F: What is it doing in the living-room?
W: Maybe I left it there.
(The tin is on the table in front of him but he can not see it because his view is restricted by the newspaper).
F: No, it's not here.
W: Oh dear, and I'm making béchamel...
F: Maybe Yorghos took it for his tea.
W: Can you ask him?
F: Now I'm reading. Anyway, it is not here.
Voice-over: Seven out of ten housewives buy evaporated milk NOUNOU. Evaporated and sweetened NOUNOU. Milk tasty and fresh.

While NOUNOU was advertised as a milk for many uses and for the whole family, GALA VLACHAS focused from the beginning on the child. Also, all the TV adverts of GALA VLACHAS were imported pre-fabricated from the mother company (Nestlé). In one of the adverts that came out in the mid 1970s, the voice-over designed for a Greek audience, included a little song that referred to a happy playing toddler drinking GALA VLACHAS:

Play-run, little one,	(*Paíkse-trékse mikroùli,*
become a man, little one	*ghíne ándras mikroùli,*
a man handsome and strong.	*ándras oraíos, gherós.*)

Due to the similar sound of the words '*paíkse*' and '*trékse*' (play-run) the song was transformed in everyday usage to 'run-run little one', a catch-phrase used in cartoons, theatrical revues, and jokes; but its most extensive use was directed towards old gentlemen who would appear on the street jogging.

In the 1980s, there was a shift of focus in milk advertisements. The general idea from now on was to present evaporated milk as the *guaranteed* milk for the development of a strong body and of children well-equipped to face a demanding future. Evaporated milk was advertised as a *good-quality* milk, that Greek mothers could *trust* for their children. Most of Nestlé's adverts (voiced-over in Greece) ended with the phrase: 'With Nestlé, I'm confident'.

In a 1986 advert by Nestlé, a toddler is shown dragging a suitcase across the room symbolically preparing for the long life journey ahead. The voice of the 'mother' is heard saying:

> Tomorrow awaits you, my little one. As distant as the horizon. As close as my hug. I do everything I can to build your little body strong so that you can grasp life and drink it without leaving a single drop.
> [Singing] GALA VLACHAS evaporé: it brings up strong children. With Nestlé, I'm confident, for you.
>
> (GALA VLACHAS evaporé, *meghalónei, meghalónei gherá paidhiá. Me ti Nestlé eímai síghouri, ya séna*).

In another Nestlé advert in 1989, a child opens a huge door into space where a friendly spaceship offers him a tin of GALA VLACHAS. In the voice-over the 'mother' says:

> Open the door of the coming century, my baby. You will live it and win it. Take knowledge as a compass. Then the future will hoist the sails. And I will give you strength for shield, and care for company.
> [Singing] GALA VLACHAS by Nestlé: it brings up strong children. With Nestlé, I'm confident.

A 1986 NOUNOU advert pictures the world of contemporary children as constituted of toys ranging from computers and plane models to astronaut costumes and robots. According to the text, NOUNOU contains all the nutritional elements that help children develop strong bodies and minds, and make them well-equipped to face the 21st century:

> These are the children that will make tomorrow the world of the 21st century. NOUNOU gives them today all the necessary strength and nutritional elements that they need to build a better new world.

The discourse of parental responsibility and rational decision-making for the child's future was widely used in NOUNOU advertisements not only in the 1980s but even more explicitly in the 1990s. The parent was invited to come up with the 'right decision' for the child's future. Again, the concept of *trust* emerges as part of the decision-making:

> When you know that everything depends on ... your making the right choice, would you let your child grow up without you being sure of its milk? Would you trust anything less for your child?. (NOUNOU, 1992)

NOUNOU is represented as the last word in milk technology and scientific research. The parent is invited to trust NOUNOU because it is the milk-product of science. This claim derives its validity from the belief that the path to healthy eating goes through the field of science. The role of science as the agent for healthy and happy children is incisively illustrated in a 1994 NOUNOU advert, which is structured on the divide between the rational world of scientists and the romantic world of children. In one part of the advert there are scientists in white coats working on computers in laboratories, and in the other a little girl peacefully asleep in a fairy-like decorated bedroom, while her mother lovingly offers her a glass of milk. The campaign was based on the slogan 'the child's milk is science for us' (*to ghála tou paidhioú epistími*). The voice-over emphasises the way in which scientific progress forms part of the notions of *trust* and *responsibility*:

> When it comes to child's milk,
> every moment in the day or night
> is valuable. Valuable for the scientists
> who ensure the quality of NOUNOU,
> and valuable for the children's world.
> Inside the model laboratories of children's nutrition,
> there, where the invaluable base of life is chosen-
> the milk,
> and where the strictest quality control is carried out,
> there, where scientific developments become a matter
> of responsibility towards the child and the parents,
> safe, nutritious milk is created: your beloved NOUNOU.
> NOUNOU: the child's milk science.

At the end of the 1980s, the flourishing market of evaporated milk in Greece appealed to other foreign companies. Together with an increase in competition, there was an increase in TV adverts for evaporated milk. In one case, the images employed to emphasise the superiority of Europe regarding milk diverted from the language of science an adopted the language of nature. In the advert of the imported brand AGROKTIMATA AROZA (AROZA Farms), idyllic green fields with cows were shown, depicting the ideal circumstances in which northern European milk is produced:

> In the green-clad grasslands of northern Europe, in a peaceful and fertile nature, the evaporated milk AGROKTIMATA AROZA is produced with love. Pure, healthy, from selected stout cows. Evaporated milk AGROKTIMATA AROZA: with all its basic vitamins. Weekly new imports.

These adverts, which represented a different image of a 'Europe' that one associated with 'nature', were contested by other companies which rejected the 'nature' argument as romantic and naive, and preferred to stick to a more scientific discourse. In a BEBELAC advert promoting the milk PANDALAC, a man dressed in a black suit and wearing thick glasses presents the product in the environment of his office, putting forward the argument of *scientific care* rather than 'green fields, clever children and happy cows':

> If you have children, the name BEBELAC is well-known to you. Here is a new BEBELAC product: the evaporated milk PANDALAC. We gave to it the same scientific care as to our baby products. And it has a very nice taste. We are not telling you about green fields, clever children and happy cows (he removes his glasses and puts them back again in the next sentence when he mentions the words 'confidence and responsibility'). But we are telling you with a lot of confidence and responsibility that BEBELAC is a very good milk. Trust it. It is a BEBELAC product. It will become your milk forever.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the evaporated milk market was characterised by high levels of competition originating from different sources. Imported evaporated milk brands had to compete not only against each other but also against own label retail brands that were available in all supermarket chains at lower prices. The increasing level of competition was the reason for NOUNOU's slogan which aimed to remind the consumer of NOUNOU's unique qualities:

> Evaporated are many. But NOUNOU is only one!
> (*Evaporé ipárkhoun pollá. NOUNOU ómos, éna!*)

But the most important front of competition for evaporated milk was the rapid development in the Greek dairy industry of fresh pasteurised milk. To protect themselves against the increasing popularity of fresh milk, FRIESLAND (the company producing the NOUNOU brand) put forward the argument of NOUNOU being the establishment that mothers know and trust. 'Mothers' featured on TV and magazines saying

> Which milk? Of course, NOUNOU. Is it time for experiments?
> (*Ti ghála? Ma fisiká NOUNOU. Peirámata tha kánoume tóra;*)

With fresh milk steadily increasing its market share in the eighties and nineties, Friesland Hellas changed its marketing strategy, which was now wholly orientated towards the development of scientifically modified milk products for children of different ages. The NOUNOU line was extended to include two new products, NOULAC (from 5 months old to two years old) and NOUNOU KID (for after the second year), that were enriched to correspond to the needs of the different age groups. FRIESLAND's so-called 'golden triplet' (NOULAC, NOUNOU KID, and NOUNOU Evaporé) was designed to fully cover the nutritional needs of children of all ages. Soon FRIESLAND's NOULAC was followed by Nestle's NESLAC.

2.3.3 Pasteurised (fresh) milk advertisements

In 1987, the dominance of evaporated milk came to an end and the Greek dairy industry, with DELTA at the forefront, took over the lead with fresh pasteurised milk. DELTA had shown steady development during the 1970s and 1980s. The history of the company dates back to 1890 when the grandfather of DELTA's current director started a small dairy enterprise in the area of Exarchia in Athens selling yoghurt. His son, Aristides Daskalopoulos, who is the founder of DELTA, entered his father's business at the age of 12. In 1955 he took over, and ten years later he transferred the business to Tavros, an industrial area on the outskirts of Athens. There, he began the construction of a dairy factory which started to operate in 1972. Dimitris Daskalopoulos, DELTA's current president and general director, took over in 1984, but he was already involved in his father's business from an early age.

In the 1980s, DELTA's development was rapid. What was characteristic throughout the decade in the way the company promoted itself to the Greek consumer was an emphasis on a progressive and modern image and an orientation to 'western' ideals. For example, a corporate advert that came out in 1982 explains how DELTA managed to become a successful, trusted company. In the text, there are multiple references to the foreign technological standards which have been met by DELTA. See, for example, references to scientists that are trained abroad, products of high quality that meet international standards, and DELTA's exports to foreign countries.

Figure 2.3 DELTA advertisement, 1982

Until 1987, evaporated milk dominated the milk market with 55.5% market share. In 1987, however, the tables were turned. DELTA 'went two steps ahead' in pasteurised milk technology. Homogenisation and carton packaging brought pasteurised milk to first position for the first time, and DELTA became leader in the milk market.

1987 was also the first year that DELTA advertised on TV. In terms of marketing strategy the aim of the first TV advert was to inform the consumer about the meaning of homogenisation and explain the opening device of the carton. What was interesting was the idea on which the advert was based: the scenario involved a fictive character from a Greek satirical novel, Madam Sousou, who full of airs and graces strives to make up for her low class origin and be accepted in the circles of

the Greek bourgeoisie, by despising everything Greek and by imitating French manners. The message that DELTA wanted to convey through Madam Sousou's condescension to drink DELTA milk was that Greek fresh milk had become as good as its European equivalents.

The advert consists of a dialogue between Madam Sousou sitting comfortably on her bed reading the newspaper and her maid who enters the bedroom carrying a tray with a carton of DELTA milk and a glass:

Sousou: Entrez!
Maid: Your milk, madam.
S: What is this, poor (*ptokhí*)[32]? I drink only fresh milk.
M: But it is fresh!
S: And how do you comprehend that it is fresh? Illiterate!
M: There! By the 'tent' (*antískino*)[33] up here! Fresh, and pasteurised it is, by DELTA.
S: Ah, French.
M: But...
S: *Silénce*, poor! And how does it open, my child?
M: There you are, madam! Like this, and this, and this..
(The camera focuses on the maid's fingers opening the carton)
S: These Europeans!
M: But ...
S: And no crust on top.
M: It's because of ... ecogenisation.
S: Homogenisation, poor. This is how the French give milk all its taste.
M: But Madam! DELTA is Greek.
S: Greek? I knew it, poor. Poor Greece has made progress!

For DELTA's first campaign, the choice of Madam Sousou was not coincidental. It represents the social reality of Greek 'xenomania'[34] and the belief that foreign goods and values are superior. In the same year, DELTA launched their second campaign to promote the new half-litre carton. The marketing strategy was to promote the concept of the half-litre as a more convenient and easier to handle milk carton. DELTA chose a new 'modern' image to associate with milk. In a set of four commercials that came out in 1987 and 1988, the company associated the milk with young and dynamic men and women, who knew how to use computer technology

[32] The word 'poor' should not be read literally but as a form of snobbism.
[33] The opening device of the carton is reminiscent of a tent/envelope.
[34] Following slavishly foreign things and manners.

to achieve their goals. All the adverts have electronic music in the background with special computer sound effects and the voice-over is limited to three phrases:

> Fresh DELTA milk:
> the milk of a new/young, distinct generation.
> When you know where you are going.
> Fresh DELTA milk: the milk of a new age.
>
> (*Frésko ghála DELTA:*
> *to ghála mias néas, dhiaforetikís gheniás*
> *Otan kséreis poú pas.*
> *Frésko ghála DELTA: to ghála mias néas epokhís*)

Each advert tells a different story: one young man sets up a broadcasting station, another man co-ordinates a group of instruments with the use of computer technology, another young woman designs with her robot-assistant a glass chamber that brings a dead rose back to life. The fourth advert presents a young woman assembling a turbo-powered car[35]. The girl, blond with blue eyes, is dressed in jeans-uniform and white sports shoes, and has an air of confidence while doing what is usually considered to be a man's job. When she succeeds in setting the car in motion, she exclaims 'Yeah!', and the music from computerised sound effects changes into country music.

This advert, like the previous one, celebrates the concept of modernisation in a language abounding with western symbols. The only difference between the two adverts is a shift from a European to an American ideal of the modern which also corresponds to different generations and their respective foreign ideals (French/European for the older generation and American for the younger).

In the third campaign, foreign images are replaced by a strong assertion of Greek national identity. The music, powerful and dominating, is used to emphasise the awesome event that is taking place: in slow motion, a group of young men and women witness a milk 'explosion' caused when a huge milk carton hits the ground and bursts out into a fountain of milk. The white liquid takes shape and forms the map of Greece (figure 2.5). At the same time the voice of the narrator says 'Here, we drink DELTA' (*edhó pínoume DELTA*). The emergence of the map of Greece formed

[35] The advert was given the first award of the General Secretariat of Equality (Ministry of the Interior) and the First Channel of National Television.

by DELTA's milk hints at DELTA's role as an agent of modernisation that provides the country with its own place on the globe. Greece as a developed, industrially advanced nation now has its own place on the map.

The advert also appeared in magazines. Here, DELTA was given the opportunity to elaborate more on what the concept of progress consisted of:

> Greek steps in fresh milk are DELTA.
>
> Steps in quality:
> Pasteurisation... Strict application of rules of hygiene... Homogenisation and Fresh Box packaging... Computerised automation at all stages of production, from collection and quality control to packaging and delivery of fresh milk.
>
> Steps for the Greek Economy:
> Investment of 1 billion drachmas... Support of the agricultural economy... Income support... Saving of currency... Annual production of 115 thousand tons... 20,000 sale outlets, co-operation with 10,000 milk-producers... Employment of 1,300 people...
> That's why, when we say fresh milk, we mean DELTA, the biggest dairy industrial unit in Greece.

The campaign raises the issue of the relation between modernisation and Greek identity. It draws on a social reality deeply rooted in the historical experience of the Greeks. When I played this advert to a group of Greek students, a young man commented:

> The slogan, 'Here, we drink DELTA', establishes that WE are here and that DELTA is ours. It is like saying to a foreigner: take away from here your nice European products, here we drink DELTA. It's very patriotic! To hell with the multinationals. We've had enough always being the losers.

In 1993, DELTA launched a new campaign with the slogan 'DELTA milk's care (*i fontídha ghálaktos* DELTA) starts from the moment milk is born and never stops'. I will refer again to this campaign in the last part of the chapter where I discuss how the notion of care is used. Here, I want to focus on the images of industrial installations and the seriousness that pervades the adverts produced under the 'care' campaign. The campaign consisted of a main advert accompanied by a set of 'testimonials' in which DELTA's employees give a 'testimony' about their work.

Figure 2.5 DELTA Advertisement

In the main advert images of an idealised Greek rural landscape merge with the long and shiny milk containers that traverse the country in order to collect the milk. The voice-over is based on a poem by the Nobel laureate George Seferis, which creates an atmosphere of solemnity while being associated with Greek rural tradition and with images of the Greek orthodox religion such as the cross of a chapel and a priest conversing with a farmer. As discussed in the previous section, tradition in the adverts is represented as a serious matter. Similarly, here, the company wants to make the assertion that they are reliable and take milk production seriously.

Apart from the main advert, the campaign also consisted of a set of 'testimonials' in which DELTA's employees gave a 'testimony' about their work. The 'testimonials' given by DELTA's employees aimed at providing further information on how DELTA cares about the raw material and its transportation. For example, a chemist in charge of a milk station collection point presents the installations, saying that

> every drop of fresh DELTA milk that is produced in this area reaches you intact and wholly fresh. And I say this with certainty because I organise both the daily collection from the farms, and strict quality control. With such equipment and such a perfectly organised system, I can take full responsibility.

In another testimonial the driver of a milk-container addresses the camera apologetically:

> Yes, I was driving fast. Sometimes you have to. Now, for example the road was blocked. And I carry fresh milk that has always got to be on time. DELTA has organised an enormous system here; and they take care that it works everyday like a clock.

The 'care' campaign lasted from 1993 to 1996 and was aimed at creating an image of DELTA as an organised, modern, reliable company that has both the means and the will to produce milk of superior quality. Drawing once more on the discourse of progress, the association of good, nutritious milk goes alongside the path of technological development.

2.3.4 Discussion

Advertisements tend to interpret and present in a materialised form cultural discourses that are present in society and inform everyday experience. Throughout the twentieth century, there has been an urgent desire in Greek society to bring itself closer to western standards. In the last fifteen years, both evaporated and fresh milk brands have been intensively advertised on Greek television. Evaporated milk advertisements stress as a competitive advantage the European provenance of the milk. In language that celebrates the achievements of technology and scientific research, the advertisements invite Greek consumers to trust evaporated milk as a product of high quality standards.

The Greek dairy industry visualised themselves as the torchbearers at the forefront of industrial development and modernisation. This vision took an objectified form through advertising. At the end of the 1980s, DELTA started a dynamic campaign for the promotion of fresh milk. Instead of advertising fresh milk on the basis of nature and freshness, quite to the contrary, fresh milk became associated with progress and industrial installations. The message was that Greek companies were now capable to compete with European dairy manufacturers and to produce milk of high standards. That was partly due to the fact that DELTA's main competitor, evaporated milk, was promoted on the issue of a scientifically advanced and industrially progressive Europe. But more than that, modernisation was the most important value that informed understandings of the role of the Greek dairy manufacturing industry in a country struggling to catch up with western economies. This value was celebrated and promoted through advertising, thus promoting an ideology that created space for, and legitimated the need of, a Greek dairy industry.

2.4 PART THREE

Fighting for Life: The Case of 'Live' Yoghurts

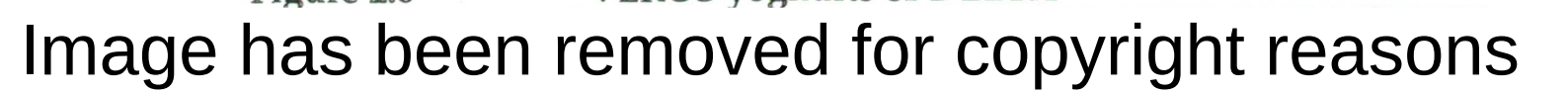
In this section, I will deal more explicitly with the question of causality in commodity chains, and with the extent to which there is a logical connection between production and consumption. Whereas in the systems of provision approach (Fine and Leopold 1993) there is a vertical logic to chains and a need to uncover causal mechanisms between the sites (see Leslie and Reimer 1999), Miller (1997a) questions the extent to which what takes place at one site can be used to explain what happens at other sites, and argues for a degree of autonomy between production and consumption. Capitalism, he contends, is sometimes less related to consumer needs or trends, and more to the reproduction of its own logic and its own categorisations, which are sometimes irrelevant to the categorisations found at the level of consumption.

Here, I want to present an example from the ethnographic study of a marketing department that sheds light on the way marketing strategies are shaped, the assumptions they are based on, and the needs they are predominantly designed to serve. With this example, I want to demonstrate how, at least in one case of the launching of a product, much less attention was paid to the sphere of consumption and much more to the needs and structures of production.

The example I will present concerns a new yoghurt line that was launched in the mid-1990s and which was gradually withdrawn two years later, resulting in possibly the biggest flop that the Greek dairy manufacturing industry had ever experienced.

The yoghurts, which were all launched by DELTA under the same brand name VERUS (figure 2.6), were presented as a 'revolution' in the history of yoghurt in Greece. The VERUS-brand concept referred to yoghurts that were 'fresh', 'real' and, in one word, 'live'. The television advertisement that accompanied the launching

Figure 2.6 VERUS yoghurts of DELTA



included poetic images of nature and wild life, pictures of plants, lakes, mountains, and wild animals, the depiction of Nature in all its greatness, often in slow motion, and the following voice-over:

> Respect of our traditional values. Protection of valuable real life (*polítimi, praghmatikí zoí*). This is DELTA's mission. That's why today DELTA makes one more revolution: a life revolution (*epanástasi zois*). VERUS: a new, complete line of genuine, real yoghurt (*ghníssio, praghmatikó yaoúrti*). Pure, from DELTA's fresh milk. Live with all the beneficial qualities of real yoghurt. Now yoghurt has the signature of life (*ipoghrafí zois*). VERUS: live yoghurts (*zontaná yaoúrtia*) made of fresh milk. Naturally from DELTA.

According to the company, VERUS yoghurts were a revolution brought about by the advanced use of technology in yoghurt production which allowed the preservation of all the enzymes that a 'real yoghurt' should naturally contain.

The VERUS line initially included four yoghurts which basically differed only in fat content (12%, 6%, 4%, 0%). Each one, however, was given a distinct character and was targeted at a different social group.

THE VERUS YOGHURTS

Fat	Concept	Target Group
12%	The rich delight	For those who appreciate genuine (*ghnísia*) authentic (*afthentiká)* things and share traditional values.
6%	The perfect balance	For those who search for inner beauty, harmony and balance.
4%	Valuable like a glass of fresh milk	For simple everyday family life.
0%	0% for beauty and delight	For those who look for nice shape and delight.

Soon after the launching of these four yoghurts, the company created another one with 10% fat content, the 10% 'full fat strained yoghurt for everyday delight' for those who 'love the classic strained, with the right taste'. The reason that this

yoghurt was added to the line was because the company gradually realised that their initial idea to undermine the dominance of their competitor's established 10% yoghurt by creating instead two yoghurts of 12% and 6%, was not a successful one as consumers were used to 10% and were looking in the new line for its equivalent.

To conclude, the VERUS campaign consisted of two phases: one was to introduce the general VERUS philosophy of the yoghurts, while the second was to present each yoghurt separately and create its own personality which would associate the general VERUS concept with the distinct characteristics (i.e. fat content) of each yoghurt. The campaign involved high advertising costs. Taking also into consideration that the competitor, FAGE, trying to retain their market share, advertised their own yoghurts as if they were newly launched, in the first seven months of the launching the total advertising cost only for yoghurt amounted to 2.015 billion drachmas, while in the same period of the previous year the total advertising cost for yoghurt did not exceed DRS 404 million (which corresponds to an increase of approximately 500%).

After two years, the VERUS yoghurts were gradually withdrawn from the market. Apart from two products, which were substantially modified, all the rest, including the VERUS brand-name, eventually disappeared, turning the VERUS campaign into one of the most costly failures of the Greek food industry. The explanations given by the marketers and the advertising agency clustered around the status of yoghurt in Greek culture. It was claimed that VERUS yoghurts came in dark coloured pots with foreign names and sophisticated concepts, and were launched in a revolutionary tone, which was thought to contradict the image of yoghurt as a 'simple' commodity, part of the everyday diet of Greeks. Another argument was that all five yoghurts were launched together creating confusion in consumers.

Besides the various reasons that were given to account for the unsuccessful outcome of the campaign, and which were most probably accurate, this is a good example of how marketing decisions are most often taken to serve the structures of production rather than the needs of consumption. A closer look at the strategic plans of the company, which were primarily shaped in relation to technology and competition, reveals that the VERUS campaign was conceptualised and materialised in such a

way that it mostly paid attention to the needs of production, whereas the decisions were justified in the name of the consumer. In other words, the conceptualisation and representation of the consumer in the company corresponded less to actual consumer practices and more to an image of the consumer that suited the company's needs and worldview. As in all cases of identity construction, the consumer was assigned by the company needs and characteristics that were infiltrated through the culture and everyday reality of production.

Let us take a closer look at the context within which the campaign was designed. To start with, the company had just finished the construction of a new yoghurt factory and was aiming at gaining a considerable share in the yoghurt market. The yoghurt market was dominated by FAGE, DELTA's biggest competitor, which one year before had launched pasteurised milk for the first time, considerably undermining DELTA's leading position in milk. It was part of the strategic plans of DELTA to become a dynamic player in the yoghurt market and maintain its total market share as a dairy producer.

When the factory was ready, DELTA had to choose a marketing strategy for the new yoghurts. At the time, DELTA had made a big breakthrough in the fruit juice market, as it was the first company to produce fresh (as opposed to UHT) orange juice. On top of that, DELTA was leader in the market of fresh (as opposed to evaporated) milk. The company wanted to capitalise further on the concept of freshness, and so the new yoghurts had to be associated with freshness. In their search to find what could be fresh about the new yoghurts, the marketers came up with two ideas: first that they were produced from fresh pasteurised milk, and second that they did not undergo pasteurisation. As DELTA's brand manager put it:

> At that time, FAGE's yoghurts were undergoing pasteurisation after the yoghurt culture was added, and all beneficial elements were killed. That's why FAGE's yoghurts had longer life. DELTA's achievement had to do with modern technology; DELTA had made an investment in technology that justified everything we were saying about more alive (*pio zontaná)* yoghurts.

The extraordinary thing about this assertion that was that FAGE's executives claimed that DELTA had simply made a mistake by assuming that FAGE's yoghurts were undergoing pasteurisation. As FAGE's production manager put it,

> DELTA took the self-evident and turned it into a slogan. Yoghurt is live by definition. It does not need pasteurisation. The so-called long-life yoghurt (*thermisméno yaoúrti)* does exist, but it is produced in countries such as Germany and exported to Arab countries. Here we have never had such a thing. Long-life yoghurt is not even called 'yoghurt' according to Greek legislation.

Regardless of who was right, DELTA promoted the notion of a revolution in yoghurt technology based on something that its competitor vigorously denied was true.

The marketing plan of the VERUS yoghurts provides further information about the ways in which the company visualised their main competitor and the consumer and shaped their strategy. It was revealing that about 80% of the marketing plan was dedicated to the analysis of DELTA's strengths and weaknesses as opposed to FAGE's, and only a very small section concerned consumer research.

The first section of the marketing plan presented DELTA's strengths and its general positioning in the food market. DELTA conceptualised themselves not only as a company with a strong image on fresh products but also as an innovator, in the avant-garde of technological developments with a new modern factory, financially sound, with a flexible organisational structure and a strategic alliance with a foreign food giant:

DELTA

- Strong image of fresh products due to milk
- DELTA produces new products (innovations)
- New factory
- Strong network all over Greece
- Financially-sound company
- Organisational structure based on products
- Strategic alliance with [a big multinational]

Opposed to the innovative, young and dynamic image of DELTA stands FAGE which holds an 80% market share in yoghurt. After a long history in the yoghurt market, FAGE is seen as the establishment: FAGE might be synonymous with yoghurt in Greece, but they are not innovators, and they have not come up with new products for the last 15 years. They do not have clear positioning, and they are not a 'healthy' company:

FAGE

Strengths	Weaknesses
•FAGE synonymous with yoghurt •Has the image of a big company •Holds 80% of the yoghurt market •People are used to the taste •Difficult to change what is established •They have the know-how •Sales network all over Greece •Sentimental bond with consumer	•No new products for 15 years (neither in milk nor in yoghurt) •Not clear positioning •No long-term strategy •Inadequate portfolio (50% of the turn-over is from two brands) •Serious financial problems

Unlike the FAGE company, which was presented as having a long history, being well-established but belonging to the past, DELTA was seen as new, flexible, dynamic, innovative, technologically advanced, modern, ahead with developments, eyes cast towards the future. If the concepts of 'freshness' and 'live-ness' did not make much sense within the context of consumption, they certainly fitted well within the culture of production. What was 'fresh' about the yoghurts was the way the company which created them visualised its role within the structures of competition in association with the new technology.

Results from consumer research were not completely absent in the marketing plan. References to consumers were made in two sections: in 'consumer trends', which were described in rather general terms, and in 'consumers' opinions about the yoghurts', which contained information about consumers' responses related to the particular campaign.

Consumer trends

- Increased interest in a healthy diet
- Trend for a better way of life
- Consumer habits changed after the shift to five working days and nine-to-five working hours.
- Light products hold a low market share because people are not yet used to the light concept

Consumers' opinions about the yoghurts

- DELTA has not shown an interest in yoghurt until now
- Pure, authentic, real, fresh, natural yoghurt is closely connected with high quality fresh milk.
- DELTA knows about fresh milk. With its pure healthy milk, it can make the perfect yoghurt.
- DELTA is associated with the concept of freshness.
- Freshness equals purity.

Also, consumers' reaction was dramatic when they found out that [the competitor's brand] had no live enzymes. They found the slogan 'true, real, yoghurt with live enzymes' excellent.

Conclusion: DELTA is capable of the production of real yoghurt.

In the above sections, the notion of the consumer appears to operate more as a justification for action rather than its source. It was part of DELTA's long term plan to construct a new yoghurt factory, which was also associated with the entrance of the company to the stockmarket. Also, DELTA wanted to make a dynamic entry into the yoghurt market in order to gain market share from its competitor and make up for the losses that were incurred from FAGE's entrance into the milk market one year before. The yoghurts had to be promoted as fresh because that suited the overall plan of the company (i.e. juices, milk, etc.). Two ways were invented in which the yoghurts could be associated with freshness: association with fresh pasteurised milk, and reference to the issue of yoghurt pasteurisation. The sections

in the marketing plan that referred to consumers' opinions were there in order to justify DELTA's pre-conceived plan of promoting the yoghurts as 'fresh', and to confirm that this plan did not contradict consumers' beliefs.

The VERUS campaign is one case in which the decisions taken regarding the commodity can be better understood and explained within the context of manufacturing competition rather than within the context of consumption. The cultural issues addressed in the campaign were part of the dominant values within the sphere of production, and were promoted in a way that best served the needs and worldview of the company.

2.5 *PART FOUR*

Two Malicious Adversaries, two Loving Mothers

2.5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the role of feeding in the construction of social relations within the family context, and in particular between the rural family and its migrant members. Here, I want to explore the practice of feeding and nurturing in the construction of social relations between dairy companies and consumers. I will show how the symbolic value of milk as a life-bond between mother and child is appropriated by dairy companies and is used as an idiom upon which a marketing relationship of love and care between company and consumer is promoted.

The importance of branding in enhancing the value of a company is one of the most basic concepts in marketing theory, and there have been numerous studies of the development of methods for the evaluation of brand equity[36]. The brand is perceived as a source of value and power for the company, as a means to 'own markets':

> The marketing battle will be a battle of brands, a competition for brand dominance. Businesses and investors will recognise brands as the company's most valuable assets ... It will be more important to own markets than to own factories. The only way to own markets is to own market-dominant brands. (Larry Light cited in Aacker 1991:5)

Brand building, therefore, plays a central role in the development of marketing strategies as a successful brand increases the power of the company (on brands and power see Stobart 1994; Aacker 1991; Crainer 1995; Upshaw 1995; etc.). The relation of brand building with the notion of power will be discussed in the following chapter, where I demonstrate how retailers seek to undermine the power of manufacturer brands in order to maximise their own space in the food chain. I will show multiple configurations of power relations between manufacturers and retailers, as these become objectified in the commodities and on the modes of

[36] Brand equity is defined as 'a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or substract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers' (Aacker 1991:15).

display. Here, my focus will be on the role of branding in constructing intimate and enduring relationships between commodities and consumers. The ultimate goal in marketing is to establish brand loyalty, i.e. long-term relationships between commodity and consumer. Increased emphasis on the concept of 'relationship' has been given in recent years through so-called relationship marketing, which orientates marketing practice towards the construction of a more personal relationship with the customer. Relationship marketing has been applied to all aspects of marketing including the consumer products domain and more precisely the relationship between consumer and brand (Fournier 1998).

From a marketing perspective, the relationship between consumer and brand is based on an understanding of the person-thing relationship in very much the same way as a mutual relationship between two human beings. Brands are attributed human characteristics and personalities, and the 'clearer' the personality, the stronger the relationship. Regarding the issue of 'clear' brand personality, Woodward (1996:123,125) writes:

> Humans react in human ways. Relationships develop through awareness and familiarity and then people decide from this whether they want to know more about a person, become friends, and the strength of that friendship. Relationships with brands develop in the same manner. If, therefore, a brand's positioning is not clear - if its personality is not clear - then consumers are likely, through lack of understanding or of trust, to reject the brand for one that they do understand. ... The personality is, in effect, the essence of the corporate or product brand. It is important for it to have values that it represents - for which it stands - as it is to have product-based characteristics.

Marketers conceptualise and promote the brand as a partner in a viable relationship with the consumer. Brands are infused with power to act as agents and as active contributing members of a relationship. In what follows, I will demonstrate how two dairy companies, DELTA and FAGE, have tried to promote an intimate relationship between their milk brands and consumers, based on the concepts of love and care. I will also show how the promotion of these concepts has been inextricably linked with the competitive relations between the companies.

2.5.2 Two 'malicious' adversaries

> Yoghurt might be white and pure, but those who make it 'slaughter' each other (*sfázontai*). (BIG, May 1997, issue 3:85)

Although the leaders of the Greek dairy manufacturing industry refer to the competition that exists between them as 'noble emulation in the pursuit of higher quality' (BIG 1997), emulation between the two companies has been far away from noble especially during the last decade. Rumours abound that a more precise characterisation of their relationship is that of a personal war between the owners of the two companies.

In describing their competitive relation, the press has used war metaphors extensively. During the phase of 'live yoghurts' in 1994-95, articles in newspapers and magazines would often bear titles such as 'live yoghurt-war', 'make yoghurt-not war', 'the yoghurt battle flames up' and so on. References to developments in the milk market would be described in a similar manner, such as 'the white war' (*lefkós pólemos*) and 'to war with the best references' (*ston pólemo me tis kalíteres sistáseis*), which was based on the phrase 'with the best references' that FAGE used in 1993 for the launching of milk[37].

The rivalry has become a favourite topic not only in the economic press but also in lifestyle magazines, such as BIG, which focuses on gender issues much more than it does on the Greek industrial economy. In BIG, an article entitled 'rivalry to the end' (*kóndra mékhris eskháton*) included a full-page illustration of the two male-leaders of FAGE and DELTA (figure 2.7), referred to as the two 'duellists' (*monomákhoi*). Inside the article, another photograph depicts two generations (father and son) of DELTA's owners, both standing next to shiny industrial installations (figure 2.8). The caption on the top of the photograph reads:

> Success from generation to generation. 40-year-old Dimitris Daskalopoulos with his father Aristides, founder of the company, outside DELTA's factory. An industrial plant that has nothing to be jealous about when compared to foreign factories. D. Daskalopoulos recalls that his father brought him into the business from the time he was still a little kid.

[37] It should be noted that the war metaphor is often used by the press to describe commercial competition. A similar case in the toy industry in Greece is mentioned by Gougoulis (1995).

Figure 2.7 The 'Duellists'

Figure 2.8 Success from one generation to another

According to the article, DELTA started as a family business in 1890 in Athens (Exarkhia). Aristides Daskalopoulos's grandfather was a yoghurt seller. Aristides was born in 1923, and already from the age of 12 he was working in his father's business, which he took over in 1955. In 1964 he bought land on the outskirts of Athens where the first milk processing unit was constructed. Around that time, his son Dimitris, still a child, started helping out in the family business.

FAGE's president, Yannis Filippou, was named after his grandfather, who started in the yoghurt business in 1920 in a small shop in Athens in Patission street. His son, Athanasios Filippou, gradually took over and visualised the construction of a dairy factory in the area of Galatsi, which finally materialised in the 1960s under his two sons, Yannis and Kyriakos. In 1974, with the construction of FAGE's big factory in

Metamorfosi, FAGE yoghurt became the first mass-produced yoghurt available in Greece. In 1981, for the first time, FAGE yoghurt through the brand name TOTAL crosses the Greek borders and started its successful career abroad.

These entrepreneurs behind DELTA's and FAGE's rapid and successful development have become symbols of success and myths in their own right of the self-made industrialist striving within politico-economic structures that do not favour modernisation, a patrimonial state mechanism, and a social climate against investment and capitalist development. Today both companies rank among the top five of the food industry in Greece. More recently, they have become symbols of *Greek* success against foreign competition, as they managed not only to keep their companies but also to develop a wide export network (FAGE) and buy out factories in other Balkan countries (DELTA). But most of all, the companies are known for the personal rivalry between their owners.

For example, there are rumours that both sides had expressed the wish to buy out the bankrupt EVGA, and that EVGA's acquisition by the Filippou Group (FAGE's owners) was a strategic move to reinforce FAGE's dominance against DELTA. EVGA had a long tradition in milk and ice-cream production, which were the two categories of dairy products that DELTA had an advantage with over FAGE. Through EVGA's acquisition, FAGE could compete against DELTA in the two fields that DELTA was strongest. What is more, when in 1990 EVGA's attempt to resume milk production failed, FAGE entered the milk market with its own brand and used part of EVGA's industrial installations for the production of fresh fruit juice - a field where DELTA had a dominant position as market innovator and leader.

Another example of this rivalry, was the controversy over the yoghurt brand BIOLAT that led FAGE and DELTA to the courts. 'Big trials...' (*megháles dhíkes*) an executive of the Filippou Group called them recalling the event. The controversy was over a yoghurt (BIOLAT) that FAGE launched in September 1992 and which was advertised as a yoghurt with Bifidus culture, which regulates the digestive system and is thus extremely beneficial for the human body. 'We used to call this product toilet-flusher (*kazanáki*)', the executive said,

> because it cleans everything inside, it flushes it down. BIOLAT was launched as medicine. That's why it didn't do well. But we knew that from the start. FAGE created BIOLAT in order to hold DELTA back. At that time, DELTA was designing its co-operation with the multinational BSN, which was effected in 1993. DELTA's plan was to reintroduce all their yoghurts with BIO culture under DANONE's technological know-how. FAGE had two choices: either to produce BIO yoghurts too, in which case the BIO name could not be used because it would have been protected by DELTA, or to destroy the BIO concept and marginalise it. FAGE launched BIOLAT 8 months before DELTA were to launch their yoghurts. It was FAGE's AGELADITSA but with BIO culture. BIOLAT's failure was aimed at destroying the BIO concept. The name BIO was now protected by FAGE and DELTA could not use it.

From that moment on, the competition between the companies started to escalate. BIOLAT was launched in September 1992 and in February 1993 the two companies were still fighting in the courts. In anticipation of DELTA's imminent move to produce a new yoghurt line, FAGE launched FAGE MILK in March 1993. As a FAGE executive put it,

> Companies are like bicycles: in order to balance, they have to run. FAGE was traditionally 'the yoghurtman' (*o yaourtás*) and DELTA was the milkman (*o ghatatás*). But when DELTA started building their new factory and were expected to enter into the yoghurt market, FAGE had to enter into the milk market and extract market share from DELTA.

In 1994, DELTA started the VERUS campaign, aiming to gain market share from FAGE's 80% dominance in the yoghurt market. When I entered the (battle)field in 1996, the two companies were involved in an unprecedented promotional war in milk, and were both offering Mercedes cars as lottery prizes. The article mentioned earlier in BIG summarises the repeated confrontations,

> the first big confrontation took place in 1993. At the time, DELTA was entering the stock market. The company dominates in milk as there is no other serious competitor. FAGE, on the other hand, is playing solo in yoghurt. FAGE's decision to enter the milk market sends a chill down DELTA's spine. From now on, the party (*ghléndi*) begins. A couple of years later DELTA hits back with yoghurts, and FAGE again with Mercedes... DELTA hits again with juices and ice-creams, FAGE answers back with price reductions up of to 200 drachmas on the 2 litre milk carton. A parade of more than 30 billion drachmas!

2.5.3 Two loving mothers

> Throughout the years, our philosophy has always been ... we could never make a product that we would not give to our children.
> (FAGE's motto[38])

FAGE's milk, launched in 1993, was an innovation in terms of packaging and in the way it was communicated. The design of the carton had rounded edges and a minimalist sketch of two cow-heads depicted with blue lines on a white background. The design was intended to emphasise the modern character of the new product and to differentiate it from the square-shaped classic milk carton with a realistic depiction of cows and greenfields. Moreover, FAGE's carton contained a new carton lid called 'easy-open' instead of the envelope-shaped closing device of DELTA's milk cartons. FAGE milk was also innovative in terms of advertising and communication. DELTA's milk advertisements were corporate-oriented and tended to emphasise the company's technological investment and development. Unlike DELTA, FAGE chose a more sentimental approach and focused on human relations and the concept of love.

FAGE based the launch of fresh milk on its well-established image and good reputation in the yoghurt market, summarised in the phrase 'it comes with the best of references'. FAGE made no reference to technologically advanced industrial installations. The key concepts for FAGE's milk advertising campaign were 'love and trust'. The film that was used for the launching of the milk contained the following text:

> Welcome the freshest idea in fresh milk. The pure raw material of FAGE's products that you love and trust. Fresh FAGE milk: milk of high quality that we collect daily from the whole of Greece and offer it to you now wholly fresh in the most modern packaging. It opens easily, it serves right and closes again to keep smells out and the milk fresh. Fresh milk: you have been expecting it for a long time. Enjoy it! Fresh FAGE milk: with the best of references.

The most repeated spot in the advert was the pouring of milk which was always inserted within the sequence of scenes. The camera would focus on the pouring of milk to connect the cow with the carton, the carton with the glass, and the glass with

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[38] Downloaded 5/2/2001 from FAGE's website: http://www.fage.gr/en/history.html

the human body. The pouring is used as a bridge in space and in time, uniting different stages in the milk chain, from the cow to the human body. Milk is given prominent position as the medium that unites production with consumption, and nature with man. The company is presented as the agent that makes this link possible.

After the launch, FAGE started its main advertising campaign with five advertisements similar in style that focused on kinship relations of love and giving, all mediated through milk: a young couple, a pregnant woman, father and son, a family. The adverts included no words except for the ending phrase: 'Fresh FAGE MILK: wherever there is love'. A popular American song of the 1950s was used as background music containing the words 'wherever you are, I miss you' matching the slogan 'wherever there is love'. In all the adverts, milk is offered 'to those we love'.

FAGE's milk branding strategy was to empower FAGE MILK with the capacity for becoming a medium of love and care. FAGE MILK was given the role of being 'between' in many different ways. In the advert with the couple, the young man offers the young woman a glass of milk. The camera focuses on the milk as it changes hands, and it becomes the centre of their relationship. She takes the glass and drinks. The camera moves from her mouth all the way down her body and to the baby inside her belly. In the father-son advert the glass of milk is offered by the boy to his father. Through a reversion of roles (the child offers milk to the parent), it becomes explicit that the offering of milk is an offering of love in all kinds of (kinship) relations. The idea behind the offering of milk is summarised in the phrase 'to those we love, we always give the best' (*s'aftoús pou aghapáme, dhínoume pánta to kalítero*).

Starting with milk, FAGE made considerable use of the concept of love, and the phrase 'one more sign of love from FAGE' *(dheíghma aghápis apó ti FAGE)* would often accompany new product innovations. This more sentimental approach to milk differentiated FAGE from its competitors (DELTA and FRIESLAND), who gave more emphasis to technological development. When, in 1996, FRIESLAND came out with their new 'fridge milk' innovation, they advertised it as 'one more achievement

by NOUNOU' (*éna akóma epítevghma NOUNOU*). FAGE's emphasis on love was to a great extent a response to the way milk had been marketed by its competitors.

At the same time that FAGE were launching their milk, DELTA were coming out with a new milk marketing campaign. Without moving too far away from the corporate image of technological progress, the new campaign focused on the notion of care. The notion of care was summarised in the phrase 'DELTA milk care' (*frontídha ghálaktos DELTA*), which could be read both as DELTA taking care of the milk and as DELTA MILK taking care of the consumer (Figure 2.9). Through the campaign, the company sought to emphasise the importance of care: care for the raw material; its immediate transportation and processing; its preservation and safe delivery; and, consequently, care for the consumers who are provided on an everyday basis with a product of the best quality.

The main advertisement of the campaign was a poetic representation of rural Greece, comprising images of Greek rural landscape and pastoral life in combination with images of religion, such as the priest, the cross, and the white chapel. It was structured on the adaptation of a poem by the distinguished Greek poet, Seferis. The words of the adapted poem are revealing of the association of DELTA MILK with the life values, care and love:

> I saw the signs and I followed them.
> I saw care and human love.
> I saw care I hadn't seen elsewhere.
> I saw milk full of life being offered.
> I saw cold lifeless metal full of life
> pass narrow footpaths,
> and then again to pass like the wind.
> I saw the world.
> I saw DELTA.
> Intact (*atófio*), Greek, fresh milk.
> Under DELTA's care.

Besides the main advert, the campaign consisted also of a set of 'testimonials' given by DELTA's employees which aimed at providing further information on how DELTA cares about the raw material and its transportation. The campaign entitled 'Care' lasted from 1993 to 1996. In 1995, in response to FAGE's more sentimentally-based advertising campaign, DELTA changed its strategy as well as its advertising

agency. The new creative director thought that the company had given far too much emphasis to the 'technologically developed' corporate image, whereas FAGE were using a more human approach to the marketing of milk. A new set of advertisements were created, which concerned human relations such a those between a pregnant woman and her baby, a grandfather and his grandson, and a young couple in love:

> Before we took over the advertising of DELTA milk, DELTA's communication was based on the concept of the huge factory, and DELTA appeared like the company-mother, a rely-on-us approach. Emphasis was given to the company's size, to the guarantee. There were some human elements in those advertisements but they were not convincing. DELTA prevailed, not the product. And that spot that showed the map of Greece formed by milk was terrifying. On the other hand, the competition were using a sentimental approach based on human values. Their sloganwas 'wherever there is love'. The sentiment was expressed through the consumer, through the mother who takes care when she loves. However, milk is simple, life is simple. And this is why we repositioned. There was need for differentiation. Not only one target-group (mother-child); we broke the target-group into four: children, young people, adults, the relation of children to grandparents. We used black-and-white images because they denote quality and purity. The advertisement had to be undertoned without many colours, without being silly (*khazokharo úmeni*) like the competitor's.

By adopting the slogan 'it is in our nature', DELTA made an explicit parallel between the natural role of the mother in taking care of the child by offering milk (Figure 2.10), and the company's role in providing milk and taking care of the consumer. A year later, the company decided to return to a modified version their old 'care' campaign[39]. The slogan 'it is in our nature' was maintained, as was also the concept that DELTA cares. In 1996, FAGE and DELTA became involved in a promotional war about which company best qualified as a caring and loving 'mother'.

[39] Although I was not told why the company chose to abandon the new campaign and modify their old advertisement, it was obvious that the advertising agency did not approve of this move because, as they said, going back to old advertisements might create confusion in consumers.

Figure 2.9 DELTA Advertisement ('Care' campaign)

2.5.4 Three years of love against thirty years of care

In May 1996, FAGE, aiming at boosting its sales of milk, decided to celebrate the anniversary of 3 years since the time FAGE MILK had made its debut into the Greek market. The promotion was built on the idea that FAGE MILK, utterly humanised, celebrated its third birthday and 3 years of love with consumers and was, therefore, offering presents through a lottery. The lottery was based on numbers printed on the milk carton cups and the presents were three Mercedes C180 Classic cars and three hundred porcelain tea services (or 'milk services' as FAGE chose to call them). The leaflets that were printed for that purpose and which circulated in supermarkets explained that

> FAGE FRESH MILK has its birthday... It completes three wonderful years with you. Three years full of your love. Your love, which made FAGE FRESH MILK with its unique taste and high quality successful. This birthday has the glow of a special reward. FAGE FRESH MILK honours your love with the greatest presents ever given... three sparkling white Mercedes every week and for three weeks in a row! And on top of that, 300 superb milk services made of porcelain every week. Unbelievable? Still, simple: 3 Mercedes every week for three weeks.
>
> Don't lose any time. Drink FAGE FRESH MILK to our health and from the 13th of May pay attention to the packaging, the numbers and the draws. And remember... The more FAGE FRESH MILK you drink, the higher the possibility of winning unique presents.
>
> One more sign of love from FAGE FRESH MILK.

The promotion was also heavily advertised on TV. The results from the draws were to be announced live in the morning schedule of a private TV channel and in two daily newspapers. As the marketer responsible for the promotion explained, the association between FAGE milk and Mercedes cars was that both products were of top quality and the first in their category:

> The Greeks have always considered a car to be a special present. Cars are attractive. And Mercedes is the top- the best, as our product is the best. Three years of love. White Mercedes, white milk. White is the colour of purity, it denotes a pure product.

The Mercedes were white only in theory because the lottery winners were in fact entitled to choose the colour of their car. The marketing manager received a lot of criticism about the Mercedes project and about the fact that he associated milk with

Figure 2.10 DELTA advertisement - 'It is in our nature'

the most luxurious car at a time when farmers were pouring milk on the streets as an act of protest against state indifference regarding their dire financial situation. DELTA's reaction to FAGE's promotional campaign was immediate. Within an amazingly short time, they copied word for word FAGE's leaflet (figure 2.11) and created a similar television advertisement. With a tone of irony DELTA announced a celebration of 30 years of care for the consumer. In their leaflet, they stated that

> DELTA is always first in your preferences. This year, DELTA completes 30 years of pioneering in fresh milk. 30 years of care for you! For 30 years now, DELTA fresh milk has been your first choice! For us, in DELTA, this is a big celebration. And that is why we feel the need to thank you for your trust with BIG PRESENTS! 9 MERCEDES and 900 PORCELAIN MILK SERVICES.

The results from the draws were to be announced live in the morning schedule of another private TV channel. Due to DELTA's immediate reaction there was a general confusion as to who was the first to launch the competition. In FAGE's marketing department, there was widespread concern that it was not made clear to the consumer that FAGE was the first to organise the competition. FAGE's marketing manager was angry with the unethical way in which his competitor had appropriated three months of his work in just one night:

> Three months' work and it took them only one night to copy it! What we learn in theory here does not apply. Here the rules are informal. It requires experience, luck, brains and intuition. It's the first time that something like this has happened. What they did was immoral and against professional ethics. FAGE would never have done that. And it harmed the market because the same thing has just happened in the car industry.

With the MERCEDES promotion, milk sales showed a temporary increase but retrned to their previous level after the promotion ended. What remained, however, was a strong expression of love and care that was channelled from the companies to the consumers through intensive promotion in the media and in retail outlets.

DELTA and FAGE had different branding strategies in milk. Since the 1980s DELTA placed emphasis on promoting a corporate image of modernisation and investment in technology. Their 'care' campaign was accommodated within this framework and was based on the idea that the company is well-developed and organised to take proper care of the milk during all stages of production and distribution. DELTA

oriented their efforts in constructing an enduring relationship between company and consumers. FAGE's branding strategy, on the other hand, privileged the relationship between brand and consumer. FAGE MILK was more humanised, offered love and presents, and celebrated birthdays. FAGE's idea of the modern was to market milk as a viable partner in a relationship of love.

What was common in both companies was their interest in using the concepts of love and care for increasing consumer loyalty in their brand. They emerged as two 'mothers', who, each one in her own way and through their products, were offering milk to their children as an expression of love and care. As will become evident in the next chapter, the brand is a central issue in the competition between manufacturers and retailers and it is the focus around which power relations are materialised not only at economic level but also at the level of who takes better care of the consumer.

Image has been removed for copyright reasons

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have concentrated on manufacturing as one stage in the chain of dairy products. My main concern was to take marketing departments as a context and unravel the dominant values and categorising principles that inform marketing decisions. Marketing strategies and advertising campaigns incorporate a system of values that first of all serve the political economy that produces them. This point was evident in the role of the dairy industry, described in the first part of the chapter, in redefining the boundary between the traditional and the modern. I argued that the distinction between the cow and the sheep which informed understandings of progress and backwardness in the first half of the century lost its symbolic importance with the development of the dairy manufacturing industry. Big manufacturers were not concerned with the fragmented sheep- and goat-breeding economy, and based milk and yoghurt mass-production on cattle. From their perspective, what constituted modernity and legitimated their role was the production of dairy products such as diet products and fruit flavours that could not be produced with traditional methods. They used an aesthetic code to communicate their perspective by choosing Greek brand names and realistic package designs for the 'traditional' products, and fancy foreign names and abstract designs for the 'modern' ones. The only exception was cheese. Due to EC regulation and the importance attributed to the use of sheep's milk for the protection of Greek traditional cheeses, the dairy manufacturers had to conform, and thus placed increased emphasis on the distinction between the sheep and the cow, quite often becoming the pioneers in the application of the new cheese regulations.

Understanding of modernisation was also expressed in milk advertisements. The second part of the chapter focused on the competitive relationship between the evaporated milk associated with foreign companies and locally produced pasteurised milk. Milk advertisements of the last two decades express the way in which the competition between the foreign multinationals and the recently-grown Greek manufacturing industry has developed. Greek industrialists had to struggle within politico-economic structures that did not favour modernisation and against prejudices associated with capitalist growth. Confronted with an inadequate state mechanism, they conceptualised themselves as the torchbearers of modernisation in

Greece, and the country's only hope of progress and development. They devoted their efforts to building industries that could compete with foreign manufacturers. As a result, when fresh milk started being advertised on national television, it was mostly associated with issues such as industrial development and computerised technology.

The marketing department as a cultural context with dominant sets of values emerges even more explicitly in the third part, which concerned the launch campaign of a new yoghurt line. Here, I argued that the cultural concept of freshness that was mostly associated with the yoghurts made more sense in terms of competitive structures than in terms of consumer values and needs. The production of yoghurt was part of the company's strategic plan to expand in the dairy market. The choice of freshness was also part of this plan and of the image that the company was promoting in other product, such as fresh juice and pasteurised milk. What was 'fresh' about the new yoghurts had little to do with consumer culture and almost everything to do with the culture of production and the way the company conceptualised itself in the market and in relation to its main competitor.

The last part explored the issue of power through brand building in association with the notions of feeding and care. In the absence of an efficient and sufficient state mechanism for food control, the companies have taken on the role of ensuring the production of high quality foods. Along with high quality products, the two biggest manufacturers have adopted the role of a 'parent' in food provision. Through the systematic promotion of the notions of care and love, they have sought to establish their milk brands as mediators of those intimate values. As will be evident in the following chapter, it is the companies' systematic effort to build strong and caring brands that retailers seek to undermine in order to create their own space in the dairy chain.

CHAPTER 3

RETAILING DAIRY PRODUCTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have witnessed a rapid growth in the retail sector in Europe and in the US, to the extent that in countries such as the UK, retailers have taken a pivotal role in the economy over manufacturers (Wrigley 2000). There has hardly been a study of retailing that has not considered in a direct or indirect way the rapid change that characterises the sector. Retailing has dramatically changed, expanded and developed in the last few decades, and any attempt to explain it should necessarily consider its rapid growth. Also, it is not coincidental that retail change has attracted a lot of attention from human geographers. Retailing, approached either in terms of retail location strategies and urban planning (Bromley and Thomas 1993; Wrigley 1988 and 1992; O'Brien and Harris 1991; Guy 1996; see also Westlake 1993 and Gardner and Sheppard 1989 for the social implications of retail location strategies), or as a space for commodity display (e.g. Seiter 1992), or in terms of a shifting of boundaries of competitive space (e.g. Marsden, Harrison and Flynn 1988), is a fundamentally geographical phenomenon (Wrigley and Lowe 1996:5).

Retailing, being the meeting point between production and consumption, has been mainly explored either in its link with production through a politico-economic perspective or in its link with consumption through a social-cultural perspective. In the first category belong the studies which focus on economic development and the consolidation of retail capital, and the changing relations of power between manufacturers and retailers in terms of distribution, own-label strategies, contracting and so on (Davies et al 1986; Dawson and Shaw 1990; Hughes 1996a; Foord et al 1996; Doel 1996). Related to the economic approach of the changing manufacturer-retailer relationship are issues related to state regulation and its role in the development of retail capital (Marsden and Wrigley 1996). Here the studies are

mostly comparative and examine the extent to which different national regulatory regimes influence the balance of power between manufacturers and retailers (Hughes 1996b; Wrigley 2000).

In the 'cultural' category of studies, retailing is approached as 'spaces of consumption' which allow for a modernist critique of display of images detached from the 'real' world (Zukin 1991). Gender related issues (such as the masculine gaze) attract most attention in this kind of approach (Bowlby 1985; Dowling 1993 and others). Just the term *'consumption* spaces' resonates the intellectual divide between the 'economic' and the 'cultural' as it renders consumption synonymous to shopping, ignoring all other consumption practices outside retailing while devoting little attention to the cultural practices of shopping itself (cf. Miller et al 1998:7).

There have been various attempts to transcend the culture-commerce dualism and bridge the gap between 'economic' and 'cultural' approaches (for the most recent one, see Jackson et al 2000). Miller et al group these attempts within what they call 'the third stage' of studies of consumption (ibid.:4-7). Wrigley and Lowe (1996) argue for the need for the development of a 'new reconstructed retail geography', which 'demands that the economic and the cultural are enmeshed and mutually constituted' (1996:4). More recent attempts to study cultural and economic processes in retailing together include Marsden's et al (1998; 2000) study of the way in which retailers maintain and increase their competitive space by promoting definitions of food quality both towards state regulators and consumers (see also Gardner and Sheppard 1989, chapter 7, for ways in which retailer-led innovations have shaped British diet). Another attempt to recognise 'the role played by culture in the spheres of capitalist production and exchange' is undertaken by Hughes (1996b), who identifies culture with corporate identity (as in brands, slogans, uniforms, stated corporate philosophy), and explores the cultural implications of the power relations between food retailers and manufacturers in the image strategies adopted by retailers. However, despite Hughes' statement that this approach 'considers the role of human agency in crafting the character of food retailer-manufacturer relations' (1996:92), it still reproduces the 'economic-cultural' divide in the sense that it construes culture as an external force that can be consciously chosen and imposed to serve economic interests.

A study that approaches economic imperatives and the production of culture as an inseparable process is the work of Seiter's (1992) on the toy supermarket chain Toys R Us, where she argues that in-store space and modes display are spatial representations of the rules and boundaries of childhood socialisation in terms of income, gender and age. A similar approach is undertaken by Blomley (1996), who demonstrates the role of in-store space, configured through a sexualised and voyeuristic male gaze, in the construction of femininity.

The approach to retailing taken in this chapter shares the concern for a combined study of the politico-economic and cultural aspects. As discussed in the Introduction, commodities, as part of our everyday material culture, can be used to transcend distinctions between the economic and the cultural. Following a system-of-provision approach, my interest in the study of retailing centres around the role of commodities in the negotiation of economic and symbolic power between manufacturers and retailers.

Fine and Leopold (1993) argue that 'whilst retail capital is a horizontal aspect operating across the economy, it is more appropriately treated analytically as falling within separate, vertically interconnected systems of commodity provision' (1993:275). Although the authors intend this distinction to apply to commodity systems as diverse as food and clothing, in this chapter I intend to demonstrate the relevance of this argument to commodities within one single food category, i.e. dairy products. When I set out to write a chapter on the retailing of dairy products as one single category of commodities, I had to decide where the boundary between manufacturing and retailing practices was to be drawn. Because not all dairy products had the same system of provision, the boundaries changed according to the commodity. This led to the need to study cheese separately from milk and yoghurt. So, while Parts One and Two focus on pasteurised milk and yoghurt, Part Three is dedicated to cheese.

In all three sections, whether they refer to small shops (Part One) or to big supermarkets (Parts Two and Three), retail space is approached as a field of industrial manufacturing competition. In other words, the competition among dairy

companies has been transferred from inside the marketing departments to retail space. This point will become particularly clear in the first section which explores the relation between dairy manufacturers and small food shops. This is a case where the power balance between manufacturers and retailers is more on the side of the former rather than the latter. It will be argued that dairy companies have transformed the corner shop into a 'brandscape', not of one brand as Sherry (1998) uses the term, but of two or three.

Section 3.3 explores the way in which power relations develop within the space of big supermarkets. Although own-label products have not [yet] penetrated into the market of fresh milk and yoghurt -dairy manufacturers still hold the power to prevent the development of own-labels - change does take place in manufacturer-retailer relations but in more subtle, less obvious ways. The signs of change find material expression on the shelf and the way commodities are categorised and displayed. As with small shops, supermarket shelves constitute another form of 'brandscape' and a field of manufacturing competition.

Although in pasteurised milk and yoghurt dairy manufacturers use retail space as 'brandscape', in cheese their power is considerably limited. Industrially produced and packaged cheese accounts for no more than 10% of the total cheese sales of a supermarket. The main bulk of cheese is sold by supermarkets at the cheese counter. The section discusses how retailers exert their power to minimise the degree of penetration of the big dairy manufacturers into the market of cheese and how they (re)produce cultural categories through the selection, display and promotion of cheeses.

3.2 *PART ONE*

Reading the Corner Shop: Landscapes of Power

3.2.1 Introduction

Most retail studies that have been carried out on the corner shop have concentrated on its chances of survival in view of the rapid development and expansion of the supermarket (e.g. Dawson and Kirby 1979; Howe 1992:105-127). While some writers argue that the corner shop should be supported because it serves the needs of a significant fraction of the population (Howe 1992), others are more sceptical about the degree to which the disappearance of the corner shop would pose a threat to any sense of local community (Miller 2001: chapter 3).

The present research is no exception to the dominant trend of exploring retailing within a context of rapid change and intense competition. Issues such as the role of the corner shop and the struggle for survival of the small shopkeeper confronted with the fast and massive growth of the supermarket will certainly inform the present study. However, rather than concentrating on the social and economic role of the small shop and the implications of its survival/extinction, my focus will be on ways in which the balance of power between shopkeepers and manufacturers is expressed and constantly negotiated through commodity circulation.

As Blackman's (1976) study of the corner shop in London has demonstrated, the type of foods available in a corner shop is central for our understanding of the changes that take place in society, such as the processes of industrialisation and urban growth. For example, she discusses the 19th century distinction between the grocer as a dealer in spices, dried fruit, tea, etc. and the trader in butter, cheese, bacon - a distinction that was gradually overcome as the grocer became less associated with foreign produce and more with the everyday needs of the household (the change in the role of tea in the English diet is an illustrative example of this transition). My intention in the present work is to explore the corner shop and the commodities displayed within it as a place where economic and cultural changes in the food sector find material expression.

The supermarket growth in the 1980s and 1990s has created a very competitive environment for the small shop. Many small shops have closed down, and many others have diversified in order to survive. Nevertheless, it should be noted that 30 percent of the small shops I visited during fieldwork[40] were no more than two years old[41]. New shops open mostly in suburban areas whereas in central areas it is more likely that they change hands.

In order to survive the competition, some small shops (less the corner shops and more the so-called mini-markets) have formed bigger associations. These associations stress the role of the small shop in preventing the development of retail monopolies and the expansion of foreign multiples which in certain cases sell exclusively foreign products. In a newspaper article, the president of a mini-market association argued that supporting the small food shops is good for the domestic economy and the country:

> Small and medium sized stores are under the oppressive competition of big supermarkets, and are led with mathematical precision to extinction... Supporting us is to our country's advantage. If retail is taken over by a few big multinational chains, no Greek products are going to reach the shelves anymore. Big chains are a threat to our products and our industry. If manufacturers do not support us, they will fall into decline like us. And if consumers do not support us, big chains will monopolise the price and quality of products... We already know the problems we are going to face. Manufacturers adopt a 'hydrocephalic'[42] policy and can not see the need to support our efforts; they do not realise that the extinction of small/medium enterprises will make them hostages of supermarket chains, and that they will also fall into decline. (Eleftherotypia, 16/2/97)

At an everyday level, these arguments are often cited by shopkeepers during negotiations with manufacturers. They argue that it is in the interest of manufacturers to support them if they do not want to find themselves entirely dependent on the big multiples. Manufacturers, on the other hand, receive

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[40] I visited a wide sample of approximately 40 shops in older parts of Athens, such as Kipseli and Pagkrati, and in suburban areas, mostly northern suburbs.

[41] cf. Galaktokomia 1999:38. Based on a research study of local foodstores in Athens, one of the observations made by the journalist was that the small food shop sector goes through constant renewal.

[42] Narrow-minded

constantly increasing pressure from the big chains that narrows down their room for manoeuvre.

This section will focus on the power relation between small shops and dairy companies. I will argue that corner shops and small food shops in Athens have developed into 'landscapes of power', to use Zukin's (1991) term. The power is mediated through the presence of brands. In order to attract customers, shopkeepers derive power from manufacturer brands, which are displayed in various ways inside and outside the shops. Corporate brands and logos inundate the shops and appear on lit signs, fridge designs, shop canopies, stickers and so on. In order to withstand the competition from supermarkets, the small shop is involved in a process of negotiation with manufacturers, in which it becomes transformed into a 'brandscape' (Sherry 1998) using brands to attract customers. Whereas the shop benefits from its cooperation with manufacturers, at the same time it functions as an extension of manufacturers' competition into retail space.

In Athens, in particular, there is a history of conceptual relations between the corner shop and dairy manufacturing, which has made dairy brands an acceptable aesthetic for the corner shop. Most corner shops in the 1950s and 1960s started off as milk shops (*ghalaktopoleía*) with the purpose of selling pasteurized milk produced by the company EVGA. Corner shops were, therefore, referred to as EVGA; a name which is still sometimes used to refer to the corner shop, despite the fact that the particular company no longer produces milk. It is with this aspect of the Athenian tradition, i.e. the EVGA shop, that I will start my reading of the corner shop as a field of negotiation of power between manufacturing and retailing.

3.2.2 EVGA and the development of the corner shop

What associates the concept of the corner shop with EVGA, the first company in Athens with industrial installations for milk pasteurisation, is the institution of the milk shop (*ghalaktopoleío*). From the beginning of the last century until after WWII, the milk shop was an establishment in which customers would sit and consume a variety of milk products, such as yoghurt, butter with honey, pudding (*kréma*) and rice-pudding (*rizóghalo*). Greek coffee[43] would also occasionally be served. *Ghalaktopoleia* offered, also, sweets such as *ghalaktoboúreko* (lit. milkpie) and *boughátsa* which were made from fillo pastry and custard-cream. It should be noted that a milk shop was not a confectionery and offered only a limited variety of sweets most of them based on milk.

When EVGA was founded in 1934, the company used the institution of the milk shop for the selling of EVGA milk. In the 1950s and 1960s new shops opened on a *ghalaktopoleío* licence with the primary purpose of selling EVGA milk. These shops, which became commonly known as 'EVGA' (used also in the plural, 'EVGES'), sold milk and milk products (yoghurt, puddings, ice-cream[44]) along with dried fruit, nuts, biscuits, and chocolates, while in some cases Greek coffee would also be served. These shops, which normally had the sign GHALAKTOPOLEIO (milk shop) or *ghalaktokomiká proiónta* (dairy products) written above their entrance, were an integral part of local community life.

Today, the concept of *ghalaktopoleio* is slowly dying out in Athens as many milk shops have either closed down or have developed into corner shops selling a variety of foods, magazines and other knick-knacks. The term EVGA still survives and denotes the corner shop, despite the fact that EVGA has long stopped milk production, and that milk no longer constitutes the main commodity sold at these shops (although milk still constitutes a vital commodity for the survival of the local shop as will become more evident in the course of this chapter). In the 1990s, there existed only a few of the old *ghalaktopoleía* where customers could sit and have a milk sweet. One, well known to Athenians, *ghalaktopoleío* -KRINOS-, which was right

[43] Also known as Turkish coffee.
[44] These dairy products were at the time produced by the company EVGA - EVGA was also the first manufacturer in Athens to produce individually packaged ice-creams (e.g. on sticks)

in the centre of the city in Aiolou Street, recently closed down giving its place to a fast-food chain, a great loss, newspapers wrote, as it was a favourite spot for a late-night *ghalaktoboúreko* and *loukoumádhes*[45].

The tradition of the milk shop has partly revived in the old (and most touristic) part of the city, Plaka. Among Plaka's numerous places to sit and have a snack, a drink or a sweet the visitor may find a few *'ghalaktopoleía'* which operate like cafés[46] using the concept of the traditional milk shop as a marketing strategy (Figure 3.1). Such is the newly-renovated 'milk-confectionery' (*ghalakto-zakharoplasteío*) KOTSOLIS in Adrianou street. The atmosphere of the shop conveys a sense of old times mainly through pictures on the walls of traditional dairying (images derived from northern European dairying practices rather than Greek). A wide variety of sweets and drinks are available. On the first page of the menu the shop-owners greet the customers both in Greek and English with a short note on the history of the shop:

> It's our great pleasure to welcome you to our renovated shop. Our tradition was established in this picturesque site of Athens almost 100 years ago. Our father, Konstantinos Kotsolis who was the founder of this place, started the delivery of milk and dairy products in 1906. The sheepfolds, where he was taking the main ingredient of the products from, were at the foot of Lycabettus hill and by the ruins of the Olympian Zeus temple. There was a door-to-door delivery in special containers, all around Plaka and Syntagma, which were densely populated neighbourhoods at that time. Later on he started making traditional pastries such as galaktoboureko (custard-filled pastry), ryzogalo (rice pudding), bougatsa (cream-filled pastry) and loukoumas (doughnut).
> The years went by, Konstantinos Kotsolis passed away, but we, his children, consider it our duty to continue the family tradition. Looking at the past and having great respect for our parents' efforts, we renovated the place. We thank you and we are waiting for you again.
>
> Yours
> K. Kotsolis family[47]

[45] Doughnuts in syrup.
[46] There should not be any confusion between these places and the coffee-shop (*kafeneío*) which corresponds to an entirely different concept and social practice (see Herzfeld 1985:151; Papataxiarchis 1991)
[47] Original text

Figure 3.1 'Milk shops' in Plaka

Fig. 3.1a (left)
While most of the old milk shops (*ghalaktopoleía*) have started to disappear, the concept has revived in Plaka, the most touristic part of the city. Recently renovated, the KOTSOLIS 'milk-confectionery' in Adrianou street claims to uphold the family dairy tradition.

Fig. 3.1b (below left) and Fig. 3.1c (below right)
'H AMALTHEIA' is another so-called 'milk shop' in Plaka. Amaltheia was the name of the goat in Greek mythology that gave milk to the Olympic god Zeus in the cave where his mother Hera protected him from his father Cronus. The picture outside the shop bearing the name 'Amaaltheia', instead of the ancient Greek goat, depicts a northern European-looking housemaid.

In the name of a dairy family tradition the renovated milk-confectionery offers a variety of traditional delicacies among which are strained yoghurt with honey and walnuts. It should be noted, however, that the yoghurt is no longer produced in the sheepfolds at Lycabettus hill but at the factory of the biggest dairy manufacturer.

3.2.3 The corner shop as a brandscape: lit-signs, posters and fridges

Starting from the 1960s and in order to facilitate the selling of EVGA milk, EVGA equipped the corner shops with lit-signs with the company's logo. Most of the company's advertisements in magazines informed the Athenians that EVGA's dairy products were sold 'in the EVGA of the neighbourhood' (*stin EVGA tis gheitoniás*).

At the beginning of the 1970s, EVGA entered into a phase of financial difficulty. Although EVGA's ice-cream was doing well, milk was manufactured at a loss. The decision was taken to stop the production of milk, which had established the EVGA brand, and keep the other profit-making products. With the disappearance of EVGA milk, DELTA, a still unknown small dairy company, seized the opportunity and provided DELTA milk to all EVGA shops. As soon as the milk was in the shops, DELTA gained negotiating power and exerted pressure on the shopkeepers to 'kick out' the rest of EVGA's products (most importantly the ice-creams) and replace them with DELTA's. In 1973, EVGA had to close down.

Despite the fact that in the 1980s corner shops sold DELTA fresh milk, the habit of calling the corner shop 'EVGA' still continued. As one of DELTA's sales executives recounts,

> every time a new corner shop opened, they called us to deliver milk. We asked them, what kind of shop are you going to open, and they would say 'we are opening an EVGA'. But here it is DELTA, we told them...

Having displaced all EVGA's products from the shops, DELTA set out to change the association of the corner shop with the name EVGA. Lit-signs with EVGA's logo were replaced with those of DELTA. DELTA changed the original phrase 'EVGA of the neighbourhood' into 'DELTA of the neighbourhood' (*I DELTA tis gheitoniás*) which was printed on every lit-sign underneath the company's logo (Fig. 3.2c). In the 1990s an advertising campaign was launched to reinforce the association of

DELTA with the corner shop. At the time of fieldwork, the old EVGA lit-signs were becoming scarce. But as the company was bought off by the Filippou Group and resumed its operations, its logo survived through ice-creams. The EVGA logo, printed on ice-cream fridges or on shop canopies, often dominates the entrance of small shops (Figures 3.2a and 3.3). Soon after DELTA started replacing EVGA's lit-signs, FAGE, DELTA's main competitor, joined in. FAGE's lit-signs under the company's logo included the phrase: 'Here, products of FAGE' (Fig. 3.2b), making thus an explicit spatial claim. Many shops ended up with two lit-signs (DELTA's and FAGE's) on either side of the shop's entrance (Fig. 3.2a) or on the same side one above the other (Fig. 3.4).

Lit-signs is one way in which corner shops both in the centre of Athens and in suburban areas have been inundated with corporate logos and thus transformed into brandscapes. Dairy companies play a prominent role, but they are not the only ones to feature in the inside and outside space of a corner shop: Coca-Cola, STAR coffee, ASSOS cigarettes, and STELLA pasta are other brands often displayed in a similar way (Fig. 3.5). The presence of the companies is ubiquitous; logos feature even on waste bins (Fig. 3.4). There are three important sites that materialise the presence of the companies in the shop: lit-signs, posters and stickers on shopwindows and inside the store and, most importantly, fridges.

Lit-signs inform customers that the products of a particular dairy company are available in the shop. The fact that milk is sold in the shop is an important piece of information because milk, bread and newspapers are the most frequently purchased items that bring customers into the shop. Corner shops are normally preferred for commodities that are purchased on an everyday basis. It is, therefore, important for the corner shop to advertise the presence of milk by hanging a sign outside with the logo of a well-known dairy company. Shopkeepers ask the companies to provide them with lit-signs and companies are normally more than willing to do so. Sometimes companies receive complaints from shopkeepers for giving a lit-sign to competitors, i.e. other small shops at a close distance. It is to the shop's benefit to install the sign as much as it is in the interest of the company to extend its presence to the shop.

Figure 3.2 An old-style corner shop in Kipseli

Fig. 3.2a (above), Fig. 3.2b (below left) and Fig. 3.2c (below right)
In this corner shop in Kipseli, which is a bakery, sweet-shop and milk shop among other things, the Coca-Cola logo features on the sign above the shop's entrance, which says 'Bakery-Confectionery'. DELTA's lit-sign hangs on the right side of the entrance and FAGE'S on the left. EVGA's logo features on the ice-cream fridge on the left and on the design of the canopy above; right inside stands a Pepsi-Cola fridge. FAGE's lit-sign **(Fig. 3.2b)** contains the phrase 'Here products FAGE'. On DELTA's lit-sign **(Fig. 3.2c)** underneath the company's logo appears the phrase 'DELTA of the neighbourhood'.

Figures 3.3 and 3.4

Figure 3.3 (above) A new suburban corner shop
A suburban bakery selling also dairy products (as indicated on the shopwindow in golden lettering). The EVGA ice-cream fridge together with the canopy and the poster-board dominate the entrance. Just inside the entrance, a stands a fridge of MEVGAL and next to it a fridge of FAGE. On the left side of the entrance, behind the EVGA ice-cream fridge, MEVGAL's sticker is attached to the shopwindow.

Figure 3.4 (left) A central corner shop
Dairy brands are an important part of the corner shop's exterior landscape. Three are the most important sites that indicate the presence of the companies in the shop: the lit-signs, stickers on the shopwindow and, inside the store, fridges. This particular corner shop (which has opened with a licence of a 'cafe-confectionery' as indicated by its sign) has a DELTA ice-cream fridge right outside its entrance. On the left side of the entrance, hangs a DELTA waste-bin, while two stickers advertising DELTA's products are attached to the marble wall. On the left-hand corner hang two lit-signs - FAGE's on top and DELTA's below.

Figures 3.5 and 3.6

Fig. 3.5 (above) Lit-signs outside of a corner shop
The photograph was taken in summer 2000. This corner shop in Dafni is almost covered by lit-signs: EVGA's new lit-sign, which circulated in 1992 when the company resumed the production of milk under new administration; FAGE's lit-sign; STAR coffee; ASSOS cigarettes; STELLA pasta. At both ends of the 'MINI MARKET' sign over the entrance features the Coca-Cola logo. The lit-sign at the top right corner (in black, red and white) informs about the kind of products available in the shop. The sign contains the words (from top to bottom): EVGA, dried fruit (*ksiroí karpoí*), drinks (*potá*), foods (*trófima*), and detergents (*aporipantiká*). Here the name EVGA does not refer to the company but is used to desribe the type of the shop and the fact that it sells dairy products.

Fig. 3.6 (left) Fridge with hand-written inscription DELTA MILK HERE
Stickers are often used to indicate that the products of a dairy company are available in the shop. In this particular case, the shopkeeper did not have DELTA's sticker which says 'Here DELTA milk', and wrote these words herself on a piece of paper, which she put on the fridge window, hiding the logo of the meat company which provided the fridge. The hand-written phrase says 'MILK-DELTA-HERE'.

Another way in which the logo advertises the presence of dairy products in the shop is through posters and stickers on shop windows as well as inside the store. There are two types of posters. First there are those which directly advertise the products' presence: for example, FAGE circulated a sticker with the phrase "here, products of FAGE" (*edhó proiónta FAGE*) while DELTA did the same for their milk with the phrase "here, DELTA milk" (*edhó ghála DELTA*). These stickers express both the manufacturers' concern for advertising and for the expansion of their presence to the space of small shops as well as the shopkeepers' intention of making explicit to the customer that they have well-known brands in their shop. In one particular shop which sold DELTA milk, the shopkeeper had hand-written the phrase 'MILK-DELTA-HERE' on a piece of paper which he placed on the window of the fridge containing the milks (Fig. 3.6). What is more, the paper that advertised DELTA's presence in the shop covered the logo of the meat-company which had originally provided the fridge.

Small posters and other advertising material are another, less explicit, way to inform customers about the presence of dairy products. Advertising posters are affixed to the shop windows and especially at the entrance (Fig. 3.7a,b) as well as inside the store, e.g. at the service counter (Fig. 3.8). The posters advertising the brands are another expression of the close competition between manufacturers, who compete in the space of shop windows: in Figure 3.7a, right next to MEVGAL's poster of milk, there are three posters of different milks by FAGE. Another example is the posters affixed on the entrance windows of a supermarket: two posters of a FAGE milk competition feature on the left and two posters of a DELTA milk competition on the right (Fig. 3.9).

Until now, I have presented two fields in which the manufacturer-retailer relation is materialised. Lit-signs and posters are not simply part of the decoration of the corner shop, but they also mediate the power of the manufacturer brand to the small retailer, who uses well-established brands and logos to attract customers. As will become evident in the second section, in the case of supermarkets retailers have

Figures 3.7 and 3.8

Fig. 3.7a (right) and Fig. 3.7b (below left)
There are two kinds of stickers indicating the presence of a dairy company: corporate stickers that refer to the company itself (such as 'here FAGE products') and stickers which advertise specific products. In this mini-market, stickers cover the biggest part of the entrance window (3.7a). Taking a closer look (3.7b), on the right is MEVGAL's sticker advertising their newly-launched milk, and on the left, are three stickers of FAGE's milks.

3.8 (below right) Inside a bread-outlet
A bread-outlet (*pratírio ártou*) is a shop that sells bread as opposed to the bakery where bread is made as well as sold. At the service counter of this bread-outlet two stickers advertising DELTA yoghurts inform the customer that DELTA products are available in the shop.

Figures 3.9 and 3.10

Fig. 3.9 (above) Milk brand competition at a supermarket's entrance
This is an illustrative example of the way dairy brands compete in retail space: at the entrance of a supermarket, two stickers of FAGE milk feature on the left and two stickers of DELTA milk feature on the right.

Fig. 3.10 (below) The fridge as objectification of social relations
Fridges objectify the relationship of the shopkeeper with the manufacturers. By the way DELTA's fridge (left) and FAGE's fridge (right) are positioned, it is obvious that the shopkeeper privileged the former over the latter. Another indication that a better relationship exists with DELTA is the fact that DELTA's fridge is double-door and FAGE's single.

more negotiating power than shopkeepers, and they use it to limit the power of manufacturers' brands.

Besides lit-signs and posters, the most important form in which the power relation between manufacturers and shopkeepers is materialised is the fridge. Small food shops need fridges to store and display pasteurised milk and yoghurt. Normally, dairy companies provide their own fridges with their corporate logos or brands. A fridge bearing on its top the name of DELTA, FAGE or MEVGAL, apart from its functional purpose of preserving the products, is a form of advertising for the shop as much as it is for the company.

There is much more in a fridge that meets the eye. Salesmen call it a 'shop window' (*vitrína*) and so it is. It not only exhibits commodities but also a whole set of relationships between shopkeepers and dairy manufacturers. The fridge is the materialisation of a complex system of negotiation and power. Just by looking at the inside of a small food shop and the fridges it contains, people in the know can draw conclusions as to what kind of relationship exists between the shopkeeper and the companies. In other words, fridges are signs from which people read relationships.

When a new shop opens, the shopkeeper contacts the dairy companies to arrange milk and yoghurt delivery. As it is mainly the milk that brings the customer into the shop, it is important for the shopkeeper to ensure delivery of milk by at least one company. Along with the delivery, shopkeepers may ask the companies to provide them with a fridge to store and display the dairy products. As a general rule, companies try to establish their presence in as many retail outlets as possible and normally agree to provide a fridge when requested. There are, however, exceptions. Companies are reluctant to provide a fridge if the shop is situated at close distance to another shop that sells products of the same company - especially if it sells them 'exclusively' (i.e. only one company). The neighbourhood's need for milk is limited; the presence of another shop in the area will not increase total turnover but only divide it. So, in order to protect the 'good old clients', the companies may refuse milk delivery or fridge provision.

Milk delivery is refused when companies judge that a shop has got little chance of growing and increasing its turnover. Too many stops for milk delivery impose on the everyday schedule of the delivery vans, and the last clients on the list get the milk late. This is a very frequent source of complaint, especially at bakeries which have to open early in the morning. This complaint is related to the importance of milk as the 'bait' that will bring the customer into the shop, even in a bakery which relies primarily on the selling of bread. Bakeries are normally good clients for dairy companies. But they expect the milk to be delivered early in the morning so that their customers can buy bread and milk together at one stop. If milk delivery takes place late in the morning, the companies might receive complaints; as a baker said,

> If I don't have milk when my customers come in the morning, they will go to another shop and buy bread and milk from there. I need the milk by eight o'clock at the latest. There has been a 50% drop in sales recently due to the proliferation of supermarkets: it's not time to lose customers just because milk arrives too late! Customers stop to shop only once. If they have to stop at different places for their purchases, they will end up going to the supermarket and you'll lose them altogether.

Refusal to deliver a fridge or milk also depends on how well established a company is. According to a DELTA salesman, new companies such as MEVGAL, which are trying to penetrate the Athenian market and to expand their sales network, are more willing to install fridges. More established firms (such as DELTA in pasteurised milk and FAGE in yoghurt) are more likely to impose restrictions on fridge delivery.

Shopkeepers are not always aware of delivery restrictions and often react by saying 'and how do you expect me to have a good turnover if you don't give me a fridge?'. I could not restrain a smile when an enthusiastic new shopkeeper, who had opened his shop directly opposite a big supermarket, asked a dairy company to provide him with a triple-door fridge. The company's sales supervisor who was contacted to deal with the matter explained to the shopkeeper that what he requested was impossible. The company only had up to double-door fridges, which were given only to supermarkets and very good clients. What is more, in his case not only could they not deliver a fridge to him but neither could they even deliver milk because there were many shops around that sold the same brand. In an effort to console the disappointed shopkeeper, the sales supervisor provided him with an alternative:

why not buy milk from the supermarket just across the road and sell it in his shop? He would get it at the same price as the dairy company (if not cheaper!), and if he did well for a while, the company would reconsider the possibility of delivering milk and fridge.

Fridges are used to attract customers. Quite often they are located near the entrance of the shop (Fig. 3.11a) so that they can be seen from the street. More than lit-signs and posters, it is the fridge that indicates the presence of a company. It is a powerful means by which companies reach out to consumers by using the space of the corner shop. Fridges become material expressions of manufacturing competition both through their mere presence and through the way they are positioned. There are cases where one company's fridge will occupy a more prominent position than its competitor's (Fig. 3.10).

But it is not only the presence of the fridge and its positioning in the shop that reveal information about the relation between the shop and the company. The fridge is a material expression of this relationship in one more way: through its contents. Dairy products themselves and the way they are displayed constitute an equally important field of power relations.

According to the fridge contract, a fridge should exclusively contain the products of the company which provided it. Any other use by the shopkeeper is prohibited. Some shopkeepers, however, do not distinguish between the companies and place in one fridge products of different companies, dairy or non-dairy (Fig. 3.11b and 3.11c). Companies are always careful that competitive products are immediately removed from their own fridges. The placement of the competitor's product next to their own brand is often seen as a threat. It would be detrimental if the consumer opened the fridge to take a particular brand and ended up with the competitor's product. The companies try to keep a clear demarcation of space between their brands. This rule applies not only in small shops but also in supermarkets where the

Figure 3.11 The fridge as field of industrial competition

Fig. 3.11a(left)
Three double-door fridges dominate the entrance of a shop. The first is from 3E (the company that trades Coca-Cola in Greece), the second from DELTA (with the VERUS brand name on top) and the third from FAGE.

Fig 3.11b (below left) and Fig. 3.11c (below right)
A closer look of those fridges would certainly upset DELTA's salesman. While FAGE's fridge contains exclusively FAGE products, DELTA's fridge has been used for the display of a wide range of milks (MEVGAL, FAGE, NOUNOU FAMILY, and AGNO), pushing at the same time DELTA's products to the bottom of the shelf.

products are placed on the shelf. Established brands avoid contact with less well-known brands, especially if the latter are newly launched. When FRIESLAND's 'fridge milk' was launched, the pasteurised milk companies negotiated with retailers so that the new milk stayed away from their products as far as possible.

Because clear demarcation of space is important to the companies, they found it confusing when a bakery chain with a high turnover (which means 'a good client') decided to rearrange the display of dairy products according to type instead of brand (Fig. 3.12). Using FAGE's fridge for the pasteurised milks and DELTA's fridge for the yoghurts, the bakery did what they thought best for their customers. This new arrangement caused unease among the companies. Because their negotiating power was limited due to the bakery-chain's high turnover, they were forced to accept it. In terms of competition, both companies had something to gain and something to lose by having their products positioned next to their competitor's. DELTA, which had a good market share in milk but was new in yoghurt, would be the loser in milk but the winner in yoghurt. With FAGE things worked in the opposite way.

The rearrangement of the display of dairy products had the implication that brand gave place to type as a primary criterion for categorisation. As such, the rearrangement formed part of the changing power relations between retailers and manufacturers at the expense of the latter. It is no coincidence that the new system of product display, which undermines the dominance of the brand, was applied by a bakery chain which, compared to other independent small shops, had more negotiating power.

In the summer of 2000, a new fashion emerged among corner shops, according to which some shops had their façade entirely decorated by one dairy company, FAGE (Fig. 3.13). As the power of the manufacturer increases, the whole shop is 'dressed' in the colours of the company and its products. According to FAGE, the corner shops that were chosen for decoration were in visible spots that would enhance the presence of the company's logo in the public landscape. According to DELTA, the corner shops that agreed to de decorated were among those that DELTA refused milk delivery, and were in a weaker position to negotiate. An example of extreme

Figures 3.12 and 3.13

Fig. 3.12 (left) The brand name on the fridge
For the promotion of the new yoghurt line VERUS in 1994, DELTA's fridges, instead of the company's logo, had on top the brand name VERUS (see also Fig. 3.11b). When this photograph was taken in 1997, VERUS were been replaced by a new yoghurt line; on DELTA's fridge on the right, the VERUS brand name has been covered by a sticker advertising the new yoghurts.

Fig. 3.13 (below) The FAGE shop
This photograph was taken in the summer 2000. It depicts a new tendency in corner shops to have their façade entirely decorated by FAGE. Being an example of extreme appropriation by manufacturers of retail space, this corner shop stands as the utmost expression of the power of dairy companies over corner shops. FAGE upholds the tradition which EVGA started fifty years ago, that of making retail space part and extension of the dairy manufacturer.

appropriation by manufacturers of retail space, the decorated corner shops stand as the utmost expression of the power of dairy companies over small retailers. By creating a 'FAGE corner shop', FAGE is literally upholding the tradition EVGA started in the 1950s and which DELTA sought to appropriate in the early 1990s, that of identifying the corner shop with the dairy company, making retail space a complete part and extension of the manufacturer.

3.2.4 Milk delivery and relations of 'exclusivity'

One of my main concerns in the thesis has been to show the embeddedness of economic and cultural processes, i.e. the degree to which economic forms of relationships and behaviour are culturally informed. Social relations are often based on notions such as commitment or mutual support; here, I will discuss how such understandings of what constitutes a relationship are applied in the economic sphere and determine ways of commodity exchange. I will focus on forms of relatedness between shopkeepers and companies with particular reference to relationships of 'exclusivity' (*apokleistikótita*).

Milk is widely regarded by shopkeepers as the commodity that brings the customer into the shop. It might not give much profit to the retailer (be it corner shop or supermarket) but its presence is an asset for the store, especially for the small corner shop which depends on everyday commodities such as milk, bread, or newspaper. Milk is sold in a wide variety of small outlets, which start from street kiosks (*periptera*) (Fig. 3.14) and newsagents, to grocery shops (*bakálika*), delicatessen, wine shops (*káves*), bakeries (*foúrnoi*), confectionery-cafés (*zakharoplasteía*), haberdasher's (*psilikatzídhika*), general foodstores (*pantopoleía*), mini-markets and of course the traditional EVGA shop which usually bears the sign 'milk shop' (*ghalaktopoleío*) or 'dairy products' (*ghalaktokomiká*).

There are two main kinds of complaint that the companies receive from the small shops. One concerns the method of payment. Delivery on credit is only allowed to supermarkets, who might take up to four months to pay off the companies, whereas small shops are expected to pay cash on delivery. Shopkeepers find this arrangement unfair and contend that manufacturers do not support the small shops: 'You don't do anything to help us; supermarkets are making profit on our money'.

Figure 3.14 **Street Kiosks**

Milk is sold in all kinds of small shops including street kiosks. The dairy companies provide them with fridges (**Fig. 3.14a** above), while in some cases they also provide them with canopies (**Fig. 3.14b** below), turning them, like corner shops, to 'brandscapes'.

What is more, manufacturers sell at the same price to supermarkets and to the small shops. Supermarkets can afford to sell at cost price, sometimes even lower (a point of dispute among supermarket chains and manufacturers) and small shops can not compete and have to sell milk at a higher price than supermarkets. Shopkeepers openly criticise the manufacturers for not supporting them:

> We can not compete if the companies sell to us at the same price as supermarkets. And if we [the small shops] close down, then the companies will become a toy in the hands of supermarkets.

Complaints expressed by the shopkeepers to the companies also relate to the delivery of milk. The two ethnographic examples that follow highlight the intensity of competition between small shops of the same local area, as it is expressed through negotiations for the delivery of milk.

A new shop-'mushroom', as the unhappy owner of a nearby shop called it, appeared one day in the suburb of Pefki, right next to a street kiosk, opposite to a mini-market and two minutes away from a bakery. The 'mushroom' (the term implied that it was redundant) sold only chewing-gum, biscuits and ice-creams but its owner had plans for further development. It was run by a young woman who called DELTA to arrange milk delivery. She did not ask for a fridge because she had already bought her own. DELTA's supervisor visited her shop, asked her where she was going to place the milk and agreed to arrange delivery. As I argued earlier, fridges work as signs of relationships, and by looking at a fridge sales people can draw conclusions about the relation of the shopkeeper with the companies. According to the sales supervisor, it was obvious that the young woman had good connections (*ékhei gheró méso*) in DELTA. He noticed that there were two DELTA ice-cream fridges in that small new shop. Under normal circumstances, he explained, the 'ice-cream-man'[48] (*paghotatzís*) would never have assented to the delivery of ice-cream when there was another shop opposite already selling DELTA ice-cream. On top of that, there were two fridges in the shop and one of them was a big fridge which was given only to good clients and big supermarkets. He also added that before he had left his office that day, he had received a call from his superior asking him to arrange milk delivery for that particular shop.

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[48] DELTA's ice-cream salesman responsible for that area.

The owner of the mini-market just across the street, who had been an old client of DELTA, was very unhappy about the situation. She called the sales supervisor and asked for an explanation. He told her that he had no grounds to refuse the delivery of milk: the woman was not asking for a fridge because she had her own. What is more, he could not argue that the delivery would be imposed with more stops because the van stopped outside the shop anyway. The only case in which he could have refused would have been if she (the mini-market) was selling DELTA milk 'exclusively'. But she was selling various milk brands, while the new shop would sell exclusively DELTA. The woman answered with bitterness that it was the first time she had heard this 'nonsense' about 'exclusivity'. She had a mini-market and she was supposed to have a variety of brands. She could not imagine a shop selling just one brand! She criticised DELTA for having a 'bad commercial policy' because in this way the only thing that the company achieved was not to increase turnover but divide it between two shops; and also displease two good clients (the other client was her brother who owned a bakery in that area and who had asked the supervisor to help his sister out). The woman claimed that now both women were going to lose money: consumers would not want to buy milk from them because they would not want to show a preference. At a neighbourhood level, she said, personal relations are important. You say good-morning, you know people. Customers would not want to give rise to bad feelings and they would now buy milk from the bakery, which was further down the road and, therefore, had a neutral status. In view of this prospect, she looked devastated because her turnover on bread would fall as well.

Another similar incident took place in the suburb of Polidrosso. A baker closed down his bakery and moved into a new neighbourhood closer to his home. When he moved out, he took DELTA's fridge from his old shop, placed it in his new bakery and called the company to deliver milk to him. DELTA's sales supervisor assented to his request because he was a good old client who soldDELTA milk 'exclusively' and who already had a DELTA fridge which he transported at his own cost. However, a small grocer down the road complained about the delivery of milk to the new bakery. He summoned the sales supervisor and pointed out that he was an exclusive client with a good turnover and that the company had no right to do that to him. The supervisor explained that the baker was an old client and there was little

he could do. The grocer threatened the supervisor that he would break the 'exclusivity' contract and put FAGE milk in his shop. The supervisor replied that the grocer had more to gain from DELTA's bonus of 'exclusivity' than from adding FAGE milk to the shelf. The grocer admitted that he was right and said that he was going to think about other alternatives.

In both examples, there is one aspect of the relation between shopkeepers and manufacturers that deserves further exploration: the relation of 'exclusivity' (*apokleistikótita*). Established companies (such as DELTA in the case of milk) put a lot of effort into co-operating with a shop on an exclusive basis and preventing it from selling the competitor's brand. The strategy of turning shopkeepers into 'exclusive clients' (*apokleistikoí pelátes*) aims at keeping the competitor out of the shop. Exclusive clients receive better treatment from the company: additional annual cheques, direct service if the shop runs out of milk, a higher limit for carton returns, and bigger or more fridges if requested. Still, there are shopkeepers who consider exclusivity to be a great sacrifice because they lose customers by not providing a variety of brands. Others understand the relation of exclusivity as working both ways: they sell one brand exclusively but they also expect the company to sell exclusively to them - a commitment the company refuses to make. If the company also sells to other shops around, the most frequent reaction of the shopkeepers is to interpret this as unfair treatment by the company and to threaten to break the exclusivity contract. Exclusivity is an (economic) concept that draws on understandings of trust, obligation, commitment and reciprocity, which might be interpreted differently by the parties involved.

If the exclusivity agreement fails and the competitor's brand enters the shop, dairy companies have devised a goal-setting system to minimise their losses. The company offers a bonus to shopkeepers when they increase sales by a certain percentage. The usual increase required to get the bonus is 3%, which is an easily attainable goal, given inflation and the constant launching of new products, which normally boosts sales. Goal-setting becomes a motive for the shopkeeper to promote the brand, and is particularly successful with new clients. Companies have devised a variety of reward systems in the form of cheques or discounts in order to keep competitors out of a shop or, once in, to minimise their losses.

Due to increased competition in the 1990s in the sphere of production, the monopolising power of the well-established manufacturers has been substantially limited. The competition among manufacturers has partly increased the power of the small corner shop. If one company refuses delivery, there are always other companies to turn to. On the other hand, supermarket growth has put a lot of pressure on the small shop, which desperately seeks support from the manufacturing industry with the argument that the small shops are the manufacturers' only hope of increasing their negotiating power against the big chains.

The aim of this section on the corner shop and in general the small food shop was to highlight the power relations between dairy manufacturers and small retailers. It was argued that small food shops are used as a space where the relations of competition among dairy manufacturers find material expression. Small shops are dominated by corporate brands and logos both in the space outside and inside the shops through lit-signs, posters, canopies, and most importantly fridges. It is in this sense that they are turned into brandscapes. The dominance of the brand in the small food shop is supported by shopkeepers themselves, who use the power of the corporate brand to attract customers. In this sense, they 'borrow' and enhance the power of the brand instead of undermining it, as happens when retailers acquire the power to impose their own ways on manufacturers. Such an example was the bakery-chain who demanded that the dairy products in the fridges not follow the logic of the brand (all the products of one company in one fridge) but would instead be displayed according to type of product (all milks in one fridge, yoghurts in another). In the next section, which is focused on supermarket chains, the rearrangement in the display of dairy products takes central stage. As retail power increases, the importance of the brand is downplayed.

3.3 *PART TWO*

Milk and Yoghurt in Supermarkets

3.3.1 A profile of the big chains

Until the 1960s, there was no sign of organised retail capital in Greece, which was partly due to discouraging state measures. State laws limited the profit of retailers to a maximum of 5%, thus impeding the growth of retail capital. The first supermarkets opened at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s. They mainly concentrated in greater Athens; by the end of the 1980s, Athenian supermarkets represented 70% of the total supermarket turnover in the whole of the country[49]. In the 1980s and 1990s, the growth of supermarkets was rapid and was further accelerated by the penetration of foreign multiples.

Based on gross profit[50], the leading retailer in 1997 was the MARINOPOULOS Group, one of the oldest multiples, which owns the supermarkets NIKI, the hypermarkets YPER, and in alliance with PROMODES/CARREFOUR, the hypermarkets CONTINENT (which alone holds the fifth position in gross profit) and the discount stores DIA Hellas[51].

The second place was held by the chain SKLAVENITIS which comprises 35 stores, all of them in greaterAthens. The first SKLAVENITIS supermarkets were opened in the poorer western part of the city -such as Peristeri (1969), Kolokinthou (1971) and Pireas (1975;1976) but today the chain has expanded to affluent areas. From the 1970s onwards, the chain is being advertised as the cheapest of all (*tóso fthiná óso pouthená*). Part of its success is attributed to its populist (in the sense of 'unpretentious') approach to consumers as well as employees. As a SKLAVENITIS executive explained,

> here, people are 'simple'; it emanates from the Sklavenitis family. There are no training seminars for the employees organised just for the sake of appearances. People learn the work on the job.

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[49] Oikonomikos Tachidromos 13/5/93 page 72. Stores with more than four cash registers are defined as supermarket.
[50] Based on research by ICAP Hellas published in To Vima 31/8/97 p.D10
[51] For the profiles of the big retail chains, see Trofima kai Pota December 1999:108

AB VASILOPOULOS (in fourth place) is also one of the oldest retailers. The first supermarket was opened in 1970 in Psychiko, one of the most prestigious Athenian suburbs. VASILOPOULOS with the slogan "And the bird's milk" (*kai tou poulioú to ghála*)[52] aimed at providing customers with a wide variety of high quality food. Aiming at quality at a higher price, VASILOPOULOS focused more on the affluent segments of the population. In the last few years, the multiple has changed its policy by lowering prices and opening stores in central densely populated areas of the city (such as Kipseli). It was the first food retail company to enter the stockmarket in 1991. One year later, the majority of its shares was sold to the retail Group Delhaize Le Lion, who maintained the name and character of the AB supermarkets and its founder (Mr G. Vasilopoulos) president.

In third place is the VEROPOULOS Group which was the first multiple to introduce own label products and to extend beyond the Greek borders with two supermarket stores in Serbia. VEROPOULOS based their image on the concept of shopping as fun due to low prices. Their slogan in the 1980s was "She is happy; she is coming back from VEROPOULOS. VEROPOULOS: where shopping is fun". In 1997, VEROPOULOS focused more on a system of weekly promotions which was advertised for several months in newspapers and magazines. The focus of the adverts was the low prices: "prices that are so low that ... is news" (*timés tóso khamilés pou eínai eídhisi*).

Foreign companies have the reputation of making the market more 'difficult' and competitive. As a representative of a dairy company, responsible for the negotiations with retail chains, put it:

> Marinopoulos is difficult. Very business-oriented, maybe because of his co-operation with Promodes. There is a rumour that Sklavenitis is the best for co-operation. He is 'humane' (*ánthropos*) and this is spread down to the last employee. I don't know much about Vasilopoulos, apart from the fact that he wants to promote own-label products. I heard that there was a seminar organised for all employees, even errand-boys, in order to show them the company's profits from own-label products.

[52] 'Bird's milk' is a Greek phrase that expresses the concept that one can find whatever one wishes.

Another smaller chain owns the ATLANTIK supermarkets. ATLANTIK started operating at the beginning of the 1980s. In 1990 the company comprised only ten stores but in four years they expanded rapidly (85 stores in 1996) through buying out five smaller companies. The chain expanded in Athens but its main focus has been in smaller towns. In 1999, the chain applied to enter the stockmarket.

According to a SKLAVENITIS executive (personal interview), during the 1980s the four main multiples followed different strategies and promoted completely different images. Gradually the differences have been minimised and all try to sell cheaper:

> The reputation of the multiples depends on their history, and the philosophy of their founders. Sklavenitis had the reputation of being cheap with a friendly atmosphere, Vasilopoulos of being expensive with a luxury that sometimes scares the consumer, Veropoulos had the reputation of a grocer because he expanded in other goods beyond food. Marinopoulos did not really have an identity. Now he sells mostly other goods rather than food. Today, we all try to sell cheap. Some through promotions, others through printed advertising. The market shares remain the same; people move around temporarily depending on the offers...

Retail competition has dramatically increased in the last decade. Since the 1980s development has been rapid but in the 1990s it accelerated through the penetration of foreign companies, such as Delhaize de Lion and Promodes. Although 1996-1997 was a very difficult period for retailers due to the intensifying price competition introduced by foreign multiples, the expansion of the sector continued at fast speed. According to a newspaper article[53], in February 1997 the MARINOPOULOS GROUP were planning the opening of 15 new NIKI stores within the year, 1 CONTINENT hypermarket and 20-30 discount stores (Dia). The VEROPOULOS Group opened 12 new supermarket stores in 1996 and were planning the opening of at least another 25 before the end of 1997. SKLAVENITIS were also preparing the opening of another 2 stores in Attica. In 1996, ATLANTIK opened 4 new stores and renovated 8, while in 1997 another 4 were scheduled to open and 12 to be renovated. VASILOPOULOS, too, were preparing 6 new stores to be opened in 1997.

[53] To Vima 2/2/97 p.D9

3.3.2 Fields of conflict between retailers and manufacturers[54]

During fieldwork (1996-1997), a price war broke out among supermarket chains as a result of the introduction by the foreign multiples of the policy to sell certain goods below cost. Retailers looked for alternative sources to make up for their losses incurred by increased competition, and exerted pressure on suppliers for further discounts and offers, increasing at the same time their charges for new products that entered the stores.

What is more, paying out time periods kept increasing and some retailers delayed paying back their suppliers by as much as six months. Retailers used manufacturers as a credit institution, leading some companies, especially the smaller ones, to the point of bankruptcy. In 1996, the paying out time periods of the major retailers reached up to 144 days (ATLANTIK) and 116 days (MARINOPOULOS-NIKI), while the minimum was 55 days (SKLAVENITIS)[55].

During 1996-1997, the conflict between food manufacturers and the big multiples reached its peak and was generally referred to as 'the shelf-war'. The Association of the Food [manufacturing] Industry (SEVT)[56], among other things, asked for the legal prohibition of selling below cost and the reduction of paying out periods. On the side of retailers, the Association of Supermarket Companies (SESME)[57] supported that it should be generally recognised that things have changed and that retailing now plays a new role in the economy. The contribution of retailing is crucial in keeping prices low, in the development of the food industry through large scale sales, and especially in the development of those companies who can not afford high advertising costs and who manage to survive by manufacturing retail label products.

The point that retailing contributes to keeping inflation down has been particularly emphasised because it constituted a major concern for the government. In the dispute between manufacturers and retailers, the priority of the government was to

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[54] Most of the information used in this subsection is derived from the monthly reviews Trofima kai Pota September 1997 pp.26-55 and Estiaseis May 1998 pp. 34-56
[55] To Vima 16/6/96 p.D14
[56] SEVT: Síndhesmos Ellinikón Viomikhanión Trofímon
[57] SESME: Síndhesmos Epikheiríseon Soupermárket Elládhos

ensure that there was a gradual decrease of the price index that would eventually enable Greece to enter the second phase of the Monetary Union. While retailers claimed that they contributed to keeping prices low, manufacturers argued that if the financial pressure continued, they would have to put prices up and increase inflation.

As far as the dairy industry is concerned, it should be noted that the owners of the two biggest dairy companies (FAGE and DELTA) have concentrated a lot of power on their hands through acquisitions of smaller food manufacturing companies. It is no coincidence that DELTA's president (Mr. D. Daskalopoulos) was at the time also president of the Association of the Food Industry (SEVT) while a high executive of the Filippou Group (FAGE) was general secretary. Consequently, it is highly possible that dairy manufacturers had comparatively more negotiating power against retailers than other food manufacturing companies.

The reason for presenting, albeit briefly, the profile of food retailing in Greece, the main fields of conflict between manufacturers and the multiples, and the role of the government in shaping the balance of power between the two, is to establish the wider politico-economic framework within which power relations operate. My main concern in this chapter is to approach the manufacturer-retailer relationship not macroscopically but through the everyday world in the supermarket. As I discussed in the introduction of the chapter, most studies concerned with the cultural implications of the power relations between manufacturers and retailers take a macroscopic point of view. For example, they are concerned with retail image strategies as a result of competition, or they are interested in the impact that these changing relations have on the availability of commodities, own-label products and the shaping of consumer diet.

In this section, the perspective from which the manufacturer-retailer relationship will be examined concerns the assortment, allocation and display of commodities on supermarket shelves where relations of power are constantly negotiated. Supermarkets, much more than small food shops, provide more space for product assortment and display. My intention is first to demonstrate ways in which changes in power relations have an effect on the way commodities are displayed, and second

to prove that distinctions between the economic and cultural/symbolic aspects of commodities are so blurred that they turn out to be meaningless.

As a starting point, I would like to introduce some basic concepts in the theory of merchandising and explore their underlying assumptions about space and order.

3.3.3 Space, order and product categories I: the principles of merchandising and Bauman's theory of order

Space management is one of the most central concepts in retailing. Textbooks of retail management provide detailed guidelines as to how space should be organised for the best economic results. In the world of retailing, space is money. It is revealing that one of the most important indexes for the evaluation of retailers' performance is profit per square meter/foot (for example, see Retail Intelligence/Food Retailing 1996:101).

Space management involves the location strategies of supermarket chains (e.g. where to open a new supermarket) as well as in-store space management (i.e. in-store layout, shelving etc.). Here, I will focus on management guidelines that concern in-store space and in particular shelving. In retail literature, these form part of 'visual merchandising' and 'product assortment and shelf allocation'.

Merchandising, like all activities in the business sphere, is based on the assumption that human behaviour is malleable and can be controlled. Space is perceived as a parameter which can be managed and improved, and can yield higher profit. One objective of good space management is to achieve the optimum way in which products should be categorised and grouped together. Proper product categorisation avoids confusion and guarantees clarity, order, and subsequent control.

As the majority of consumer purchasing decisions occur inside the store (Drèze et al 1994:303), it has been estimated that improved space management can increase profitability by up to 100% (Cox and Brittain 1993:188). In a self-service environment, interior display is a key factor because efficient space management can 'sell' the merchandise better by increasing product awareness and by stimulating

unplanned purchases (Morgenstein and Strongin 1992:455-456). There are four ways in which a display can be used to increase purchase (Drèze et al, 1994:303):

1. the location of the product within the display (i.e. choice of position on the shelves)
2. the area (facings) devoted to the product on the shelf
3. product adjacencies
4. aesthetic elements, such as size and colour co-ordination and special signage

The first point -the position of the product on the shelf- is of great importance. Space value inside a store changes vertically as well as horizontally, based on in-store movement patterns. For example, in terms of store layout on a horizontal axis, the space near the entrance of the store has a higher value than the back. Vertically seen, in multi-storey retail sites, the ground floor has higher space value than upper floors. Vertical and horizontal analysis of space value applies also on a particular shelf and is based on the way the human eye travels over the stock. The best selling lines are those just below eye-level[58]. Bottom shelving is the next best and should be used for medium sellers, while the top shelf should accommodate slower lines. However, in the refrigerated sections, studies have shown that a clearly favoured position is the well (i.e. the bin at the bottom of an L-shaped refrigeration case) (Drèze et al 1994:324). Another basic space management principle is that vertical space should be used for different sizes of products- smallest at the top, largest at the bottom-, and horizontal for different items and styles (Morgenstein and Strongin 1992:465).

The general rule for the right positioning of merchandise is to use the best selling position for goods providing the greatest profit (i.e. profit margin x rate of sale) (Cox and Brittain 1993:188). Rate of sale, i.e. how fast the products sell, is as important as profit margin. Fast movers will occupy prominent higher space-valued positions. Slow movers, even those with high profit margin, will end up in less prominent positions. The speed with which products move is closely linked to the space they

[58] For the social implications of the eye-level technique see Morgenstein and Strongin (1992:468). Supermarket professionals have difficulty deciding the height of eye-level shelving. Most shoppers are women (lower height than men) but it is men who are estimated to make most impulse purchases.

are assigned. Products on the shelves follow the evolutionist logic of survival: the slower they sell, the less chance they have to survive.

Another space parameter is the area devoted to a product on the shelf. This space is measured in 'facings' which are the number of columns allocated to each product starting from the edge of the shelf and extending towards its depth. The issue here is to decide on the optimal number of facings that should be allocated to a particular category of products. Allocating too many facings is a waste, and allocating too few involves the risk of remaining out-of-stock. This issue is associated with the management of inventory that should be kept in the store, which again is of economic importance to the retailer as it occupies space. Therefore, studies have been carried out on the amount of inventory that should be displayed (i.e. how many facings should be allocated to each product) and the effect it has on purchasing behaviour (Urban 1998; Drèze et al 1994).

Until now, I have discussed the first two principles of shelf-space management and display. The first was on the choice of the shelf and the second on the amount of space allocated on the shelf. The third point- product adjacencies- refers to the way categories of products should be combined on the shelf. For example, for better results, impulse items should be interspaced with demand items (Morgenstein and Strongin 1992:465). The fourth point refers to the co-ordination of aesthetic elements (such as size, colour and signage). The underlying concept in all four points is that there is an optimal way in which products can be combined and allocated in space so that they 'sell' better. The space is there, and retailers should know how to place the products in such an order that they maximise its use in quantitative as well as qualitative terms.

I will conclude this presentation of merchandising principles with a few words on categorisation and order as basic concepts in merchandising. A large part of shelf-space management is about decisions on how products will be categorised. Retail textbooks place special emphasis on the 'clarity' and 'logic' that should pervade product categorisation: 'a *logical* arrangement helps to sell the stock: *like* products should be grouped together in displays'. (Cox and Brittain 1993:189, my emphasis)

This suggestion leaves room for interpretation as to what constitutes a 'logical' arrangement of 'like' products. Textbooks instruct that order is important. Products should be 'logically ordered', so that the customer can easily locate them. 'Principal merchandise sections should be prominently labelled by clear overhead signs'. The merchandise should be 'clearly priced'. 'Clutter and the bazaar effect' should be avoided. However, care should be taken that the displays are not 'too tidy and symmetrical', because a certain amount of 'planned disarrangement' may encourage the customer to buy. Dump displays, for example, are intentionally disarranged to give out the effect that this is not 'normal' merchandise and is therefore discounted. Damaged goods, which do not comply with the specifications and are in a way different, 'should never be on normal display'. Finally, another rule for clarity is that 'stock should be regularly cleaned and dusted' (for all the above guidelines see (Cox and Brittain 1993:189-193).

The guidelines for efficient merchandising are based on the concept of order and categorisation as tools for controlling purchasing behaviour. The clearer the categories, the better human behaviour can be monitored towards the intentions of the retailers. Emphasis is given to the notion of clarity which comprises practices such as clear labelling and pricing as well as the regular dusting of the stock itself. Clarity, as opposed to ambiguity, is necessary in order to avoid confusion among customers, which might interfere with the merchandiser's intentions and bring negative results. 'Like' products, i.e. products grouped in the same category, are expected to exhibit homogeneity, i.e. a condition of normality. 'Abnormal' merchandise (such as damaged goods) should be withdrawn from the 'ordered' shelf because they do not belong there. Everything is carefully monitored- even the unordered displays are intentionally disarranged. Lack of order conveys the message that this is not a normal situation so that the customer expects to get the merchandise at a lower price. Nothing is placed at random in a supermarket, and even spontaneous behaviour is carefully programmed by positioning the merchandise in sites that easily attract the customer's attention.

Bauman (1991) provides a useful theoretical model that can explain the assumptions that underlie the rules of merchandising. He considers taxonomy, classification and inventory, as strategies of modern practice. 'Modern mastery', he argues, 'is the

power to divide, classify and allocate...' (1991:15). He demonstrates the line of assumptions that are involved in the act of classification:

> 'To classify ... means first to postulate that the world consists of discrete and distinctive entities; then to postulate that each entity has a group of similar or adjacent entities with which it belongs, and with which -together- it is opposed to some other entities; and then to make the postulated real by linking differential patterns of action to different classes of entities ... To classify in other words is to give the world a *structure*: to manipulate its probabilities; to make some events more likely than some others; to behave as if events were not random, or to limit or eliminate randomness of events'. (1991:1)

From Bauman's account, it is evident that the project of naming and classifying is grounded in a quest for control over the future, on a manipulation of probabilities. In an ordered world 'one knows how to go on', 'how to calculate the probability of an event' and 'how to increase or decrease that probability'. 'Performance', he argues, 'is measured by the neatness of the divisions between classes, the precision of their definitional boundaries, and the unambiguity with which objects may be allocated to classes'. In his theory of modernity, the elimination of ambivalence is the driving force for action in a continuous quest for order. As Bauman explains, ambivalence and order are two sides of the same coin. The former is a product of the latter, and the more one struggles for order, the more one is faced with ambivalence.

Bauman applies his theory to the shopping mall, which he regards as the ideal type of 'triumphant rationality'. He argues that 'the world of malls is free from overlapping categories, mixed messages and semiotic unclarity' and that 'in the mall, the environment is carefully monitored..., neatly split into thematic sections, each reduced to clear-cut, stereotyped and easy-to-read symbols with virtually all danger of ambiguous interpretation removed' (1991:226). Faithful, however, to the tradition that views malls not as representations of the 'real' world but rather as a site of recreation and pleasure, as a dream-world (Williams 1982) based on spectacle, Bauman juxtaposes the order and lack of ambivalence inside the mall with the 'messiness' of the 'real world'. He argues that malls offer a controlled and secure environment which is enjoyable because it functions as an escape from reality.

3.3.4 Space, order and product categories II: the critique

The advent of supermarket shopping and modern consumerism in combination with the popularity of advertising led to concerns about the 'hyperreality' of the spectacle. Retail sites based on the display of commodities were regarded as the centre of a culture based on the visual. In some cases, commercial spaces were criticised as being a disorienting experience of fleeting images detached from social reality (Jameson 1991). Offering a new insight into the study of retail space and consumption, Humphery (1998) contends that the supermarket no longer represents the new and the spectacular, but has been integrated to a familiar, routine everyday experience. Rather than a world of fantasy and excitement, the supermarket today should be approached as a mundane environment and as part of the everyday public landscape.

As discussed earlier, Bauman considers ordering to be a characteristic of the project of modernity, according to which retail space represents the effort undertaken by experts to control human behaviour through naming and classifying. As a result, retail space is a highly monitored environment that entirely contradicts what is going on in the 'real' world outside. What Humphery is actually suggesting is treating the inside of the store not in opposition but as a continuation of the world outside. Taking Humphery's point into consideration, the theory needed for the study of merchandising should be one that does not separate the spectacular from the everyday, the 'real world' outside from the 'dream world' inside.

Focusing on the concept of order, Law's (1994) critique of Bauman is that symbolic aspects of ordering can not be studied separately from the physical world. Ordering strategies should not be treated as a 'purely social' phenomenon detached from physical reality. Ordering is about creating distinctions between materials. As Law explains,

> There are patterns of ordering, modes of reflexivity, expressions of the modern project. These modes tell of themselves, they perform themselves, and they embody themselves in different materials. And, as part of this, they gather experience about the universe, they process it, they distribute it, and they display it. (1994:151)
>
> This is why I believe that the stories which we tell of ordering will be the poorer if we try to treat them separately from the materials in which they are carried. (1994:142)

Law's theory of order suggests that the physical criteria based on which commodities are ordered constitute a material expression of culture. According to the merchandising theory presented earlier, 'a logical arrangement helps to sell the stock: like products should be grouped together'. But who defines what is 'logical' and according to which criterion are different commodities 'like'? The formation of commodity categories and the choice of the physical criteria based on which commodities are included in one category and excluded from another is by no means independent of cultural understandings of the world.

Through the ordering of food on the shelves, retailers are not replicating existing culinary knowledge; they are producing and reproducing it. This is one of the points that Cook et al (2000b) make in their critique of Category Management, a recent managerial theory of retailing. As they put it,

> Category Management is clearly more than a managerial theory of how to organise pre-existing product categories, but rather involves the active production of those categories themselves.

The authors question the extent to which these categories accurately represent food categorisations by consumers, and point to the politico-economic interests that claims of knowledgeability about the consumer world help legitimate. Through the inclusion and exclusion of food in and from certain categories in a highly complex world, Category Management involves 'the production of some interpretations and associations rather than others'. These interpretations, based on their claim to constitute 'objective' knowledge, make legitimate a certain way of organising foods that serves certain interests within the provision system rather than others. For example, according to merchandising theory, manufacturers and retailers might have opposing interests when it comes to the way commodities are displayed on the shelf. As Drèze et al (1994:302) argue, shelf space management is a different problem depending on whose perspective we take: the manufacturer's or the retailer's. Manufacturers want to maximise economic return on their own products and are interested in brand performance. Retailers, on the other hand, are interested on category performance.

There are different ways of ordering commodities. What follows will illustrate how dairy products are ordered on the shelves, objectifying at the same time the point of view of the retailer as well as the power balance between dairy manufacturers and supermarkets within a context of rapid change.

3.3.5 Merchandising categories

Before I present the criteria according to which retailers order and display on supermarket shelves pasteurised milk and yoghurt, I will summarise some of the main points made in the previous chapter about product categories that emerge from the sphere of manufacturing. Eventually, my purpose is to examine the degree to which categories of retailing support or undermine the interpretations and categorisations of manufacturers.

One of the points made earlier was that milks have corporate brand names, i.e. their brand name is the name of the manufacturer. Special brand names are only given to products that do not conform to the idea of 'milk for everybody'. One such example is chocolate milk. Chocolate milk, which is targeted at teenagers, is available in colourful cartons based on brown. It is intended for fun and not as part of an everyday diet. It does not take much effort for one to realise that FAGE's chocolate milk brand N'JOY is a milk designed for enjoyment. According to the manufacturers' interpretations, chocolate milk should be aesthetically removed from the category of milk/staple into the category of dessert. The move from the staple category into the dessert category is materialised through the choice of colourful cartons and the use of fancy foreign brand names, whereas white milk is associated with health and nutrition, and is communicated in a manner that conveys seriousness and reliability.

The distinctions between seriousness and fun, staple food and delicatessen/dessert, emerge also within yoghurt categories. The Greek legal Code of Food and Beverages defines as 'yoghurt' only white yoghurt; a yoghurt with the addition of fruit does not belong to the 'yoghurt' category but to the category of 'desserts' (*epidhórpia*). The distinction between white and fruit yoghurts is fundamental in Greek culture. Unlike the British yoghurt market where fruit yoghurts constitute an overwhelming majority and many white yoghurts are either Greek or Greek-style, in the Greek

market yoghurt is predominately white. Through yoghurts, FAGE found an interesting way to redefine tradition. Down-playing the association of sheep with tradition and cows with modernity (a distinction that was greatly emphasised in cheese), they shifted the boundary of the traditional and the modern according to the degree of industrial processing[59]. Thus, the traditional yoghurt was defined as the set yoghurt that has not been further processed by extraction of fat or the addition of fruit flavours. Diet yoghurts and fruit yoghurts, which are industrial innovations, became by juxtaposition modern.

In brief, of central importance in the categories that emerge from manufacturing is the distinction between white and flavoured milk/yoghurt, which also links to other cultural dualisms such as staple/delicatessen and seriousness/fun, and which becomes materialised through the choice of colour, packaging drawings, brand names and language.

What happens to the dairy products once they enter the threshold of a supermarket? What principles govern their positioning on the shelves and what kind of implications does this have for manufacturers and their power relations with retailers? These are mainly the questions that I will address here by taking a closer look at the practices of display of dairy products on supermarket shelves.

In 1997, when I first conducted fieldwork in supermarkets listening to the negotiations between the companies' representatives (mostly sales supervisors) and the supermarket managers, I found that the space allocated to each company depended to a great extent on on-the-spot negotiations and personal relations. A typical conversation between a supervisor who asks for more space and the supermarket manager might be as follows:

> Sales supervisor: I can see that you have me a bit confined (strimoghménos). This product is given far too few 'facings' (prósopa)[60].

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[59] There is no point in the companies setting the boundary between sheep and cow's milk because all their yoghurts are made from cow's milk, the only exception being the two sheep yoghurts made by FAGE and MEVGAL.

[60] A facing is one line of products starting from the back of the shelf towards the front.

> M: You know, competition is increasing, many new products are coming in... But I'll see what I can do. Maybe I could 'open a window' (anoígho paráthiro)61 here...

In the summer of 2000, I enquired what the situation was in merchandising. In three years, the competition had considerably increased. I was told that only between April and June 2000 DELTA had launched eight new products[62] and FAGE had introduced multiple packaging[63] for two products. The space allocated to each company was now centrally agreed by higher executives for the whole chain and there was less room for on-the-spot negotiations.

By focusing on the display of milk and yoghurt in a big supermarket, I will demonstrate the basic principles that pervade product display and categorisation. Starting with the pasteurised milk section (Figure 3.15), horizontally the most important criterion for categorisation is the corporate brand (i.e. the manufacturer). FAGE milks are displayed on the left, DELTA milks in the middle and MEVGAL milks on the right. The boundaries between the companies are clearly demarcated.

Next to the milk section on the left is the yoghurt section (Fig. 3.16). Figure 3.16a shows the horizontal categorisation. Similar to milk, the main principle is again the manufacturer. MEVGAL occupies the space on the left, FAGE the centre and DELTA the right. FAGE dominates by far on this particular yoghurt-scape and occupies the biggest area on the shelves. Although the space allocated here to FAGE in comparison to DELTA is somewhat disproportionate, it is normal that FAGE, being more established, with a higher market share in yoghurt, will be given more space for yoghurt than the other companies.

Notice that in Figure 3.16a, though there is a clear categorisation of products according to manufacturer, there are some patches in between that do not conform. Towards the top, within the space allocated to FAGE, there is a big patch containing

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[61] This is a common technique of promotion. Instead of allocating space on one shelf, the facings of a product can be divided between two shelves, one above the other, creating what the merchandisers call a 'window'.

[62] By the term 'products', I refer to what is termed *'kodhikós'* (lit. code).

[63] Multiple packaging (i.e. two or more items packaged together) is a technique that has been used a lot in the yoghurt market in the last few years. From a merchandising perspective, multiple packaging means that the products require more space on the shelf.

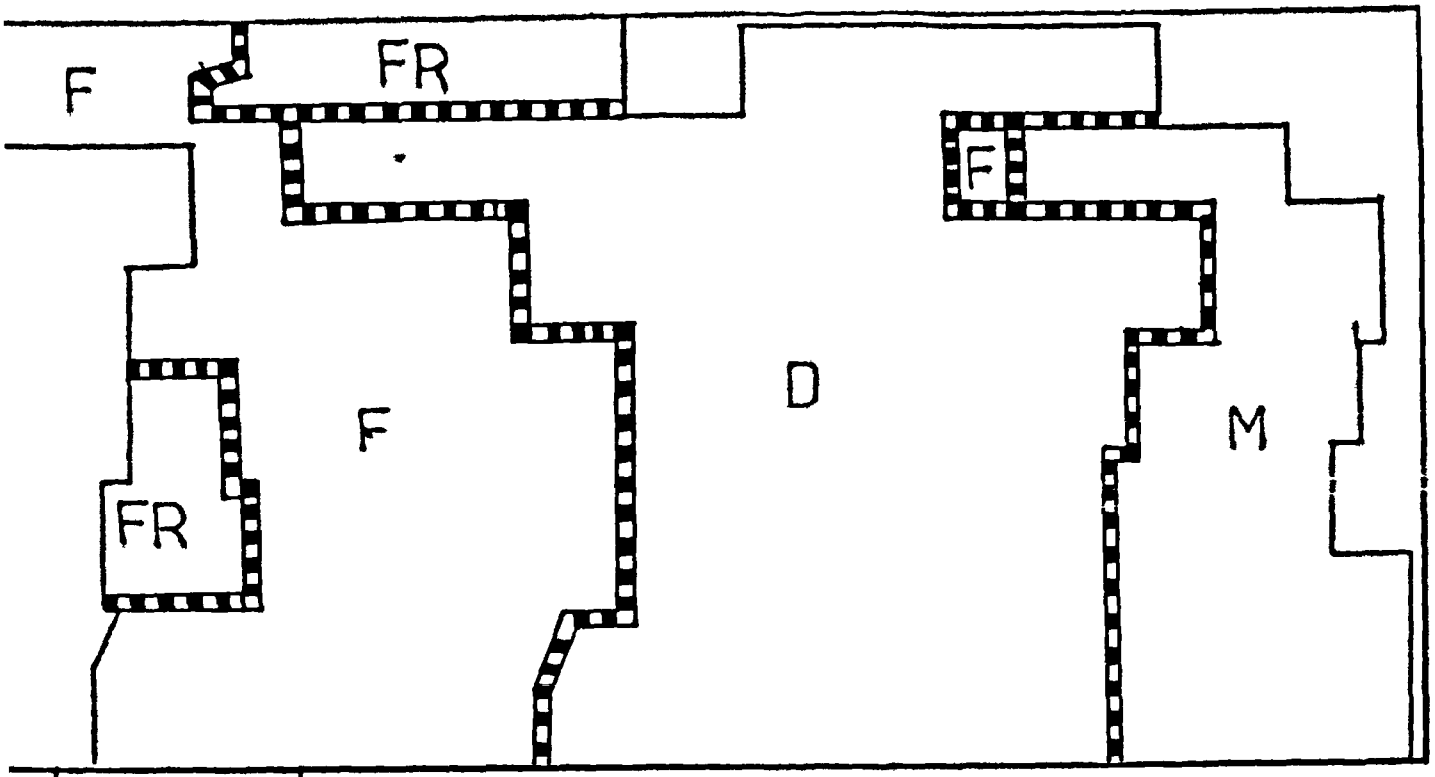


FIGURE 3.15a

KEY: F: FAGE
D: DELTA
FR: FRIESLAND
M: MEVGAL
: MANUFACTURER BORDERS.

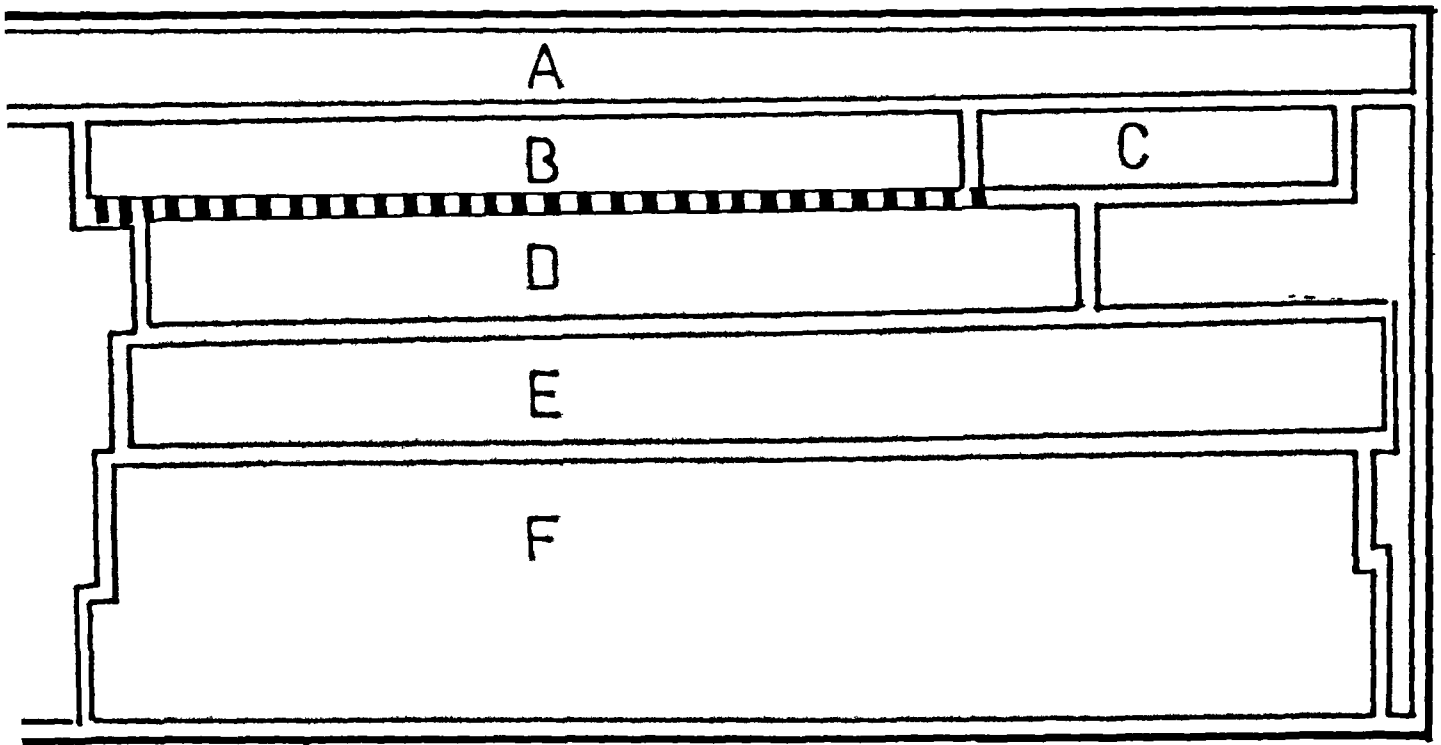


FIGURE 3.15b

KEY:
A: MILK CREAM
B: CHOCOLATE/COFFEE MILK
C: BUTTERMILK
D: 1/2 lt WHITE SKIMMED/SEMI-SKIMMED/FULL-FAT MILK
E: 1 lt WHITE SEMI-SKIMMED MILK
F: 1 & 2 lt WHITE FULL-FAT MILK
: WHITE MILK/CHOCOLATE MILK BORDERS.

Figure 3.15 Milk in supermarkets (1997)

Fig. 3.15a
Fresh milk in the L-shaped fridge of a big supermarket in a suburban area of Athens in spring 1997. On the horizontal axis there is a clear divide between the companies. From left to right the companies FAGE, DELTA, MEVGAL. On the left, the newly-launched milk NOUNOU FAMILY by FRIESLAND.

Fig. 3.15b
In the same photograph, milks are now vertically divided by size (2 litre at the bottom, 1 litre in the middle and 1/2 litre at the top) and fat content (full-fat/blue at the bottom, semi-skimmed/green in the middle and skimmed at the top). Also, starting from the bottom upwards there is a gradual increase of the degree of processing: in the well, white full-fat milk, then white semi-skimmed milk and, at the top, chocolate milk.

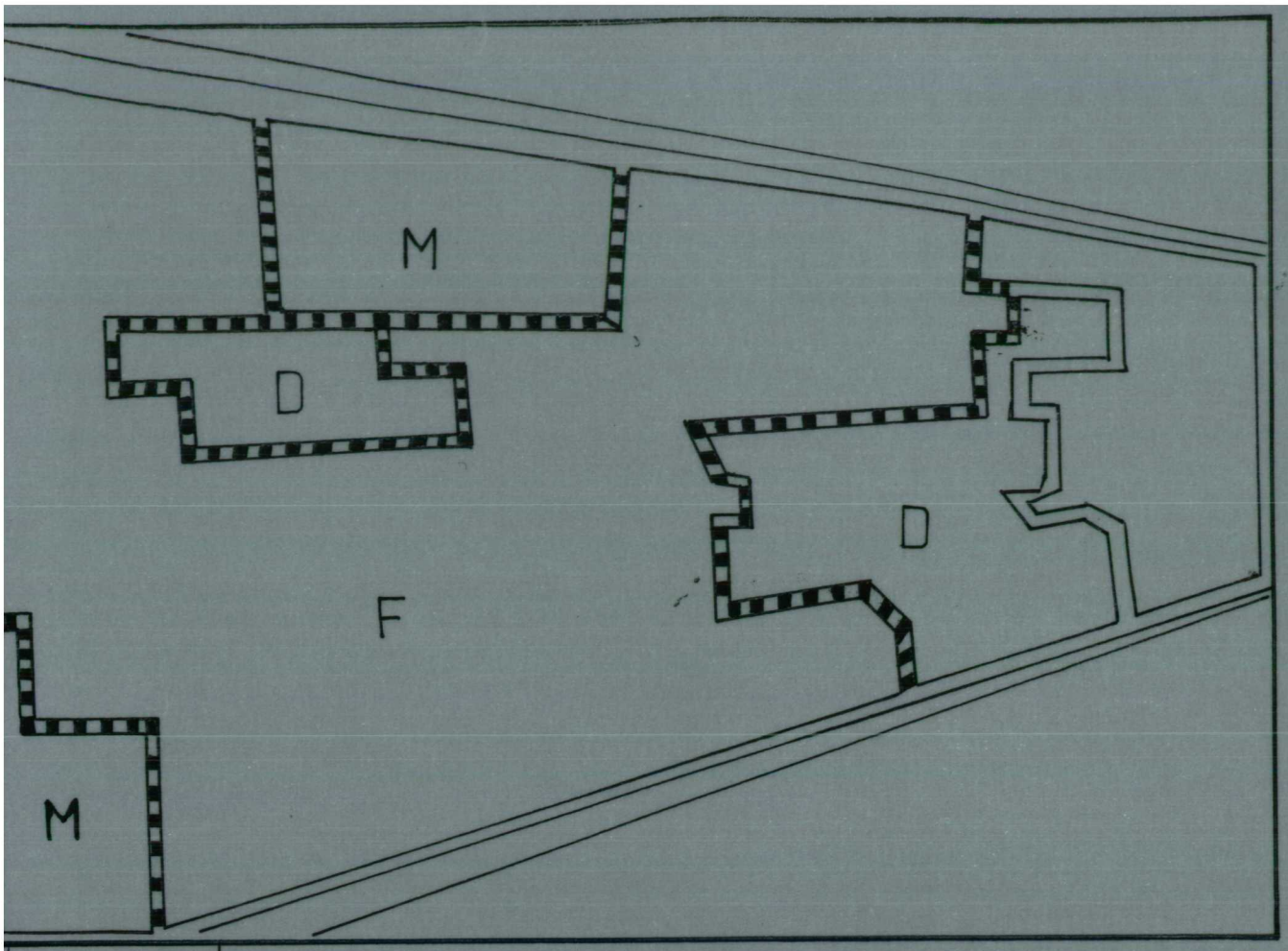


FIGURE 3.16a

KEY: F: FAGE M: MEVGAL
D: DELTA : MANUFACTURER BORDERS.

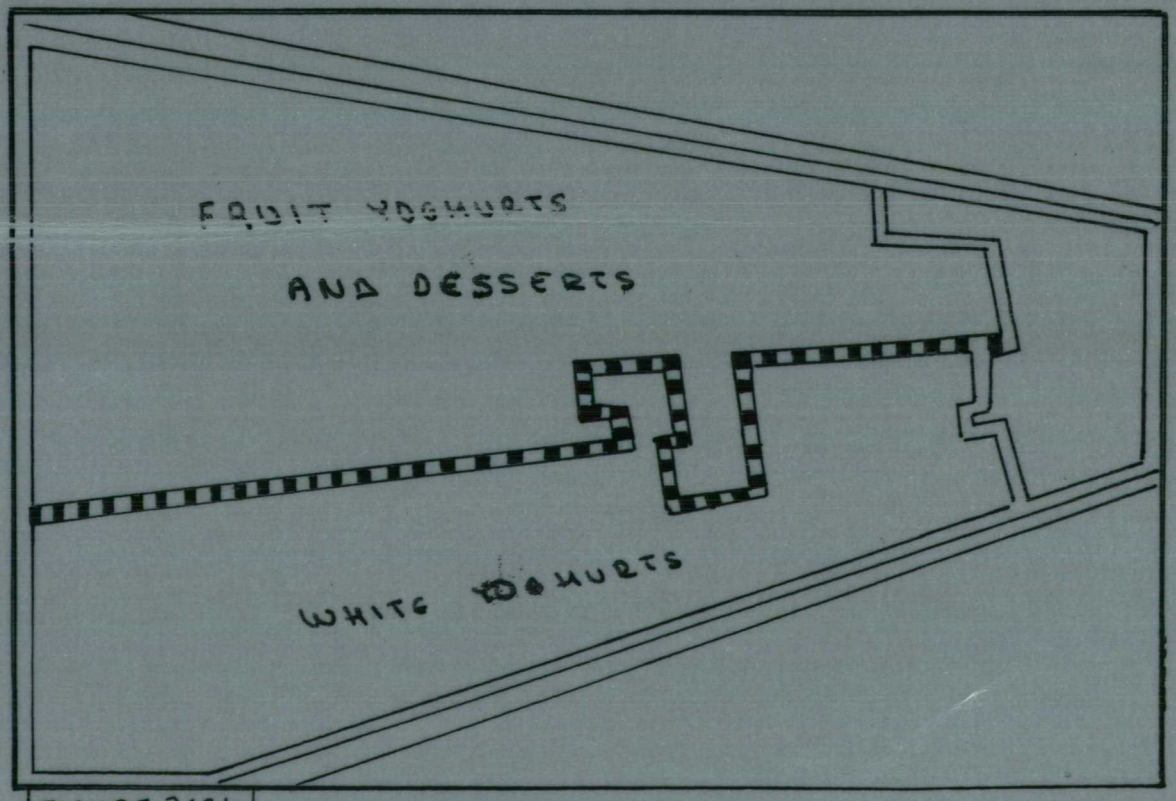


FIGURE 3.16b

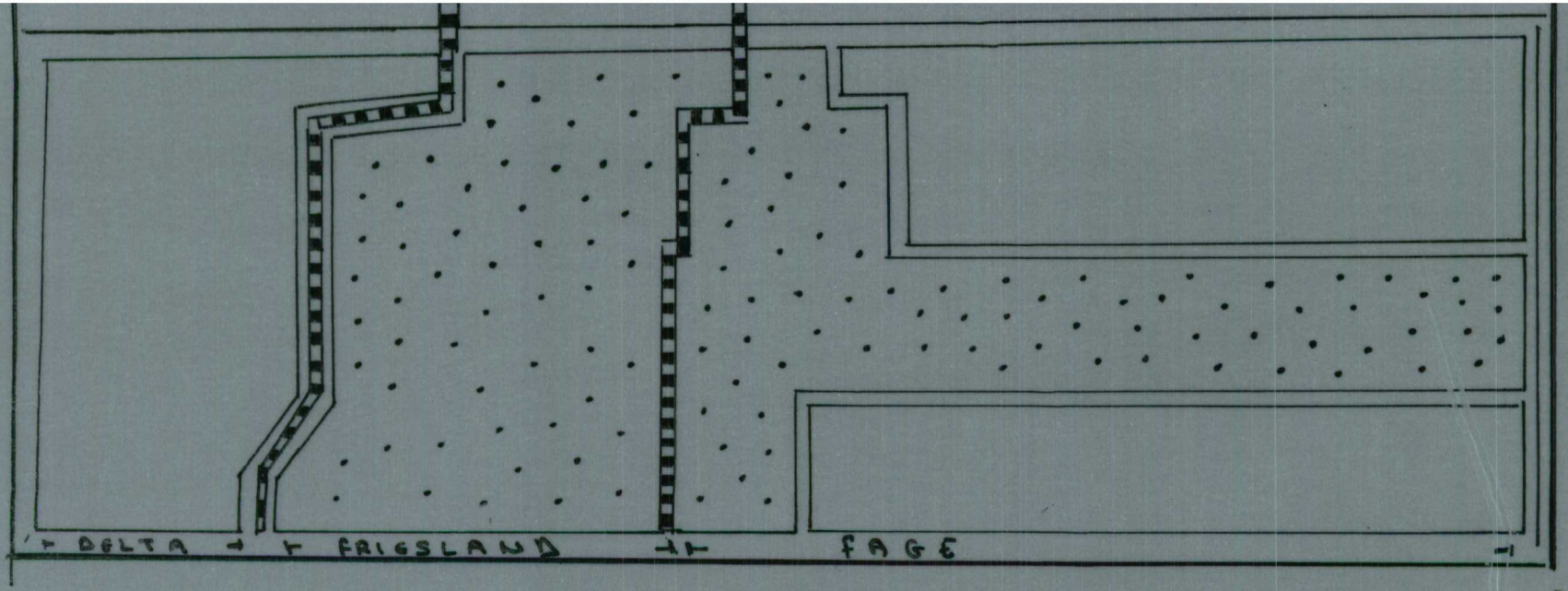
Figure 3.16 Yoghurt in supermarkets (1997)

Fig. 3.16a Horizontally, yoghurts are divided by manufacturer, which constituts the main criterion for categorisation. From left to right: MEVGAL, FAGE and DELTA. Within FAGE's space in the middle are two 'patches' of MEVGAL's fruit yoghurts (top shelves) and DELTA's children yoghurts (underneath MEVGAL), next to FAGE'S children yoghurts. In these cases, the yoghurts have been positioned according to type instead of company but the dominant criterion of categorisation is the manufacturer. **Fig. 3.16b** Vertically, the same section is divided beuween white yoghurts and fruit yoghurts/desserts by an almost straight line. White yoghurts are fast-movers and are positioned on the lower shelves and, especially, in the well. Fruit yoghurts and the desserts occupy the upper part of the shelf section.

MEVGAL's fruit yoghurts and a smaller one underneath containing DELTA's yoghurts for children. In these cases the merchandiser broke the manufacturer principle of categorisation and allocated the products according to yoghurt type. In other words, what the merchandiser did was to position MEVGAL's and DELTA's yoghurts not within the space assigned to the companies but within FAGE's space next to FAGE's respective products.

In the previous section on small shops, we saw that the rearrangement of product display was allowed only to a bakery chain. In all the other cases of small shops, salesmen and sales supervisors ensured that each fridge contained the products of the company that provided it. The bakery chain, however, had a high turnover and, consequently, more power in negotiating and imposing their own mode of display. According to the person responsible for product display in the bakery, consumers are not interested in the milk manufacturer but in the type of milk. As his interpretation of consumer needs was that fat content is more important than brand, he wanted to make sure that the dairy products were displayed in such a way that consumers found more easily what they were looking for, and that the dairy category as a whole would yield higher turnover.

What in 1997 was only a few exceptions of blurring the boundaries between manufacturers, in 2000 became the strategy of grouping products according to type instead of brand followed by most big supermarket chains. Figure 3.17 comprises two photos taken in the summer of 2000 of the milk section in two supermarkets of different chains. In the first supermarket (Fig. 3.17a), the retailer continues to follow the brand principle of grouping the milks. DELTA is positioned on the left, FRIESLAND in the middle and FAGE on the right. In the second supermarket (Fig. 3.17b), the retailer has completely rearranged the shelves based on product type. On the left, full-fat milk (blue), in the middle semi-skimmed milk (green) and on the right fridge-milk (full-fat and semi-skimmed) and, finally, chocolate milk (brown). Some retailers, based on their interpretations of consumer needs, were led to the decision to re-order the display of products according to type and not according to manufacturer. Their belief that consumers care more about fat content than brand was actually confirmed in my research among consumers. Figure 3.18a,b present the same situation in the yoghurt section of the two supermarkets. In the first



KEY: FRESH MILK

FRIDGE MILK OR MILK OF HIGH PASTEURISATION

: MANUFACTURER BORDERS.

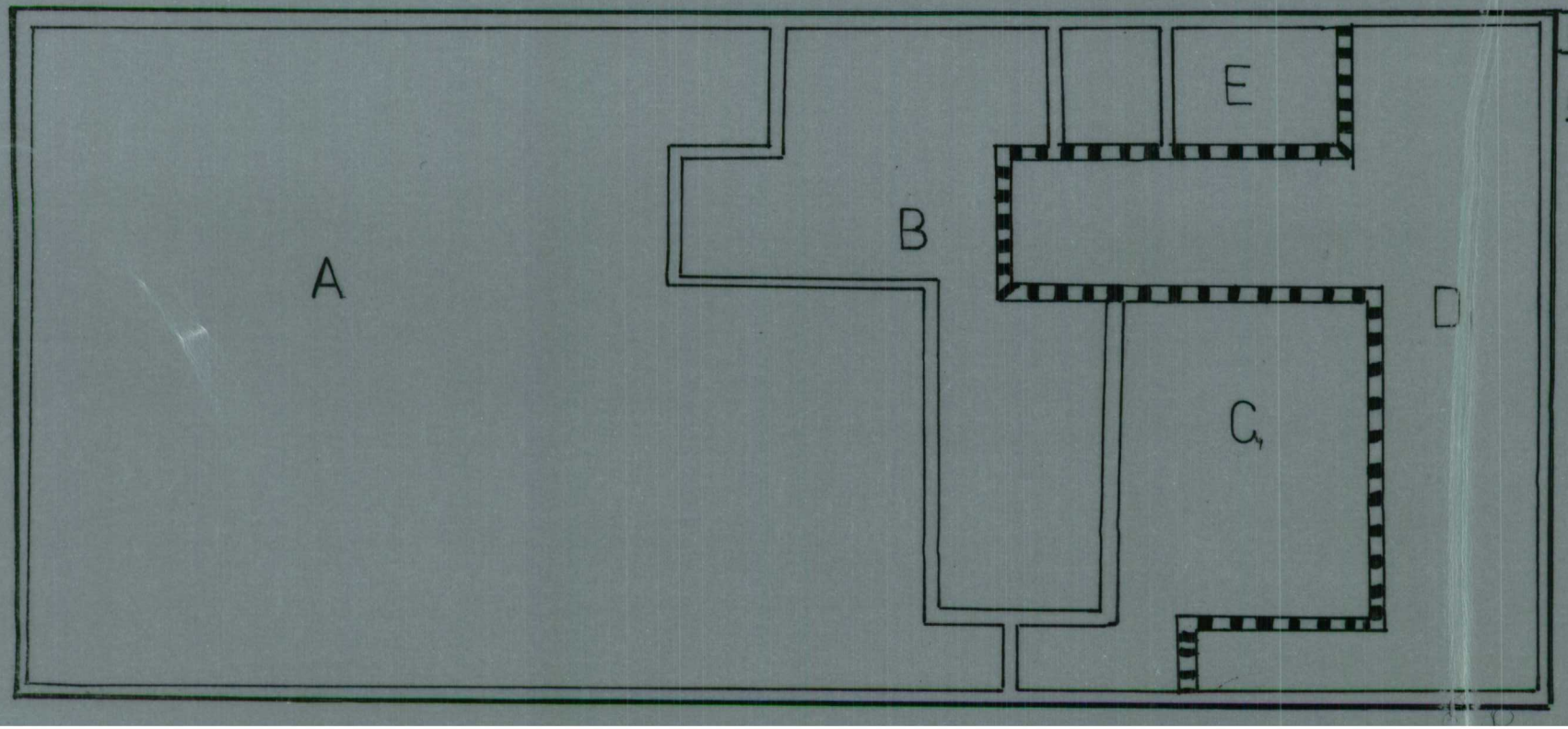


FIGURE 3.17b.

KEY: A: FULL FAT MILK
B: SEMI-SKIMMED MILK
C: FRIDGE MILK
D: CHOCOLATE MILK
E: BUTTER MILK

: WHITE MILK/ CHOCOLATE MILK BORDERS.

supermarket (**Fig. 3.17a**) milks are horizontally divided by manufacturer: DELTA on the left, FRIESLAND in the middle and FAGE on the right FRIESLAND's NOUNOU FAMILY and FAGE's GALA FARMA (which both belong to the new category of 'fridge milk' or milk of high pasteurisation) have been incorporated into the fresh milk category between DELTA's fresh milk on the left and FAGE's fresh milk on the right, creating a horizontal subcategory within fresh milk. Chocolate milk is positioned on the top shelves.

Fig. 3.17b This supermarket chain has imposed a re-ordering of the shelves from manufacturer to type of product. Horizontally, milks are divided by type: full-fat milk on the left, semi-skimmed milk in the middle, 'fridge milk' towards the right and chocolate milk on the far right. Skimmed milk is available only in 1/2 litre carton and due to its small size and limited consumption is pushed to the top shelf. The only exception, where the milks of the same manufacturer are positioned together, is the company AGNO (top left) because of its low market share and small number of milks.

Figure 3.17 Milk in supermarkets (2000)

URE 3.18a

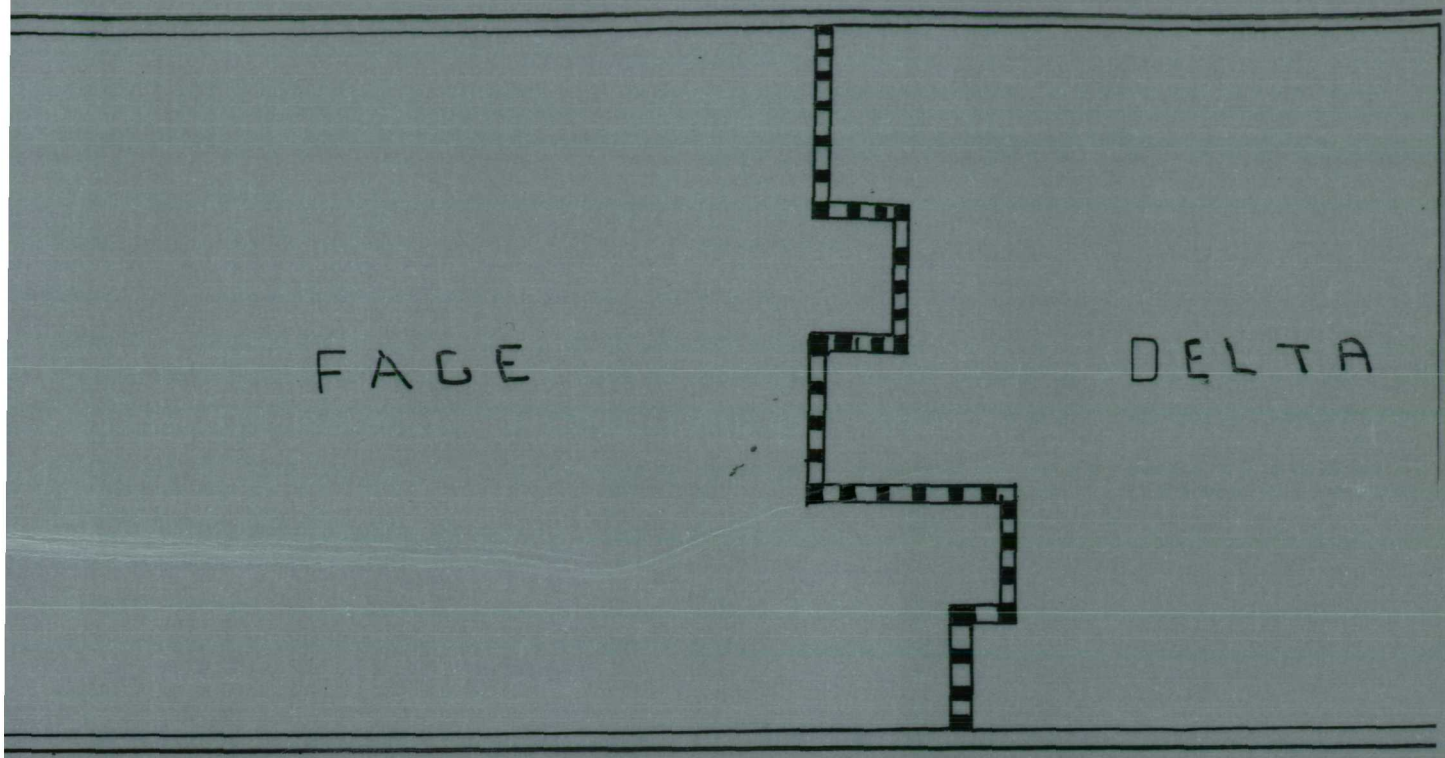


FIGURE 3.18b.

KEY: C : CHILDREN YOGHURT
FR : FRUIT YOGHURT / DESSERT
0% : 0% FAT CONTENT
2% : 2% FAT CONTENT
4% : 4% FAT CONTENT
S : STRAINED YOGHURT
: WHITE YOGHURT / FRUIT YOGHURT BORDERS

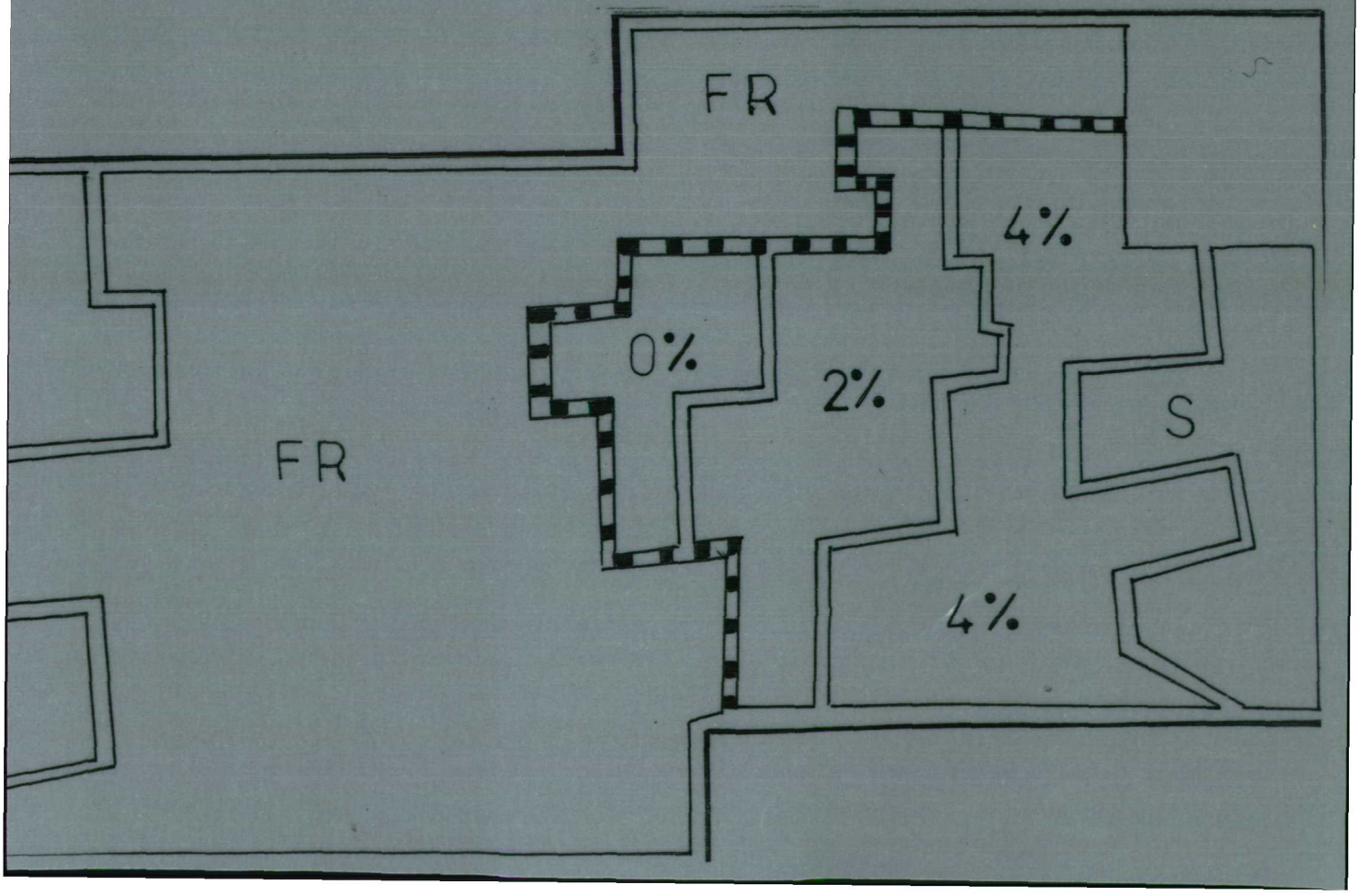


Figure 3.18 Yoghurt in supermarkets (2000)

In the first supermarket (**Fig. 3.18a**), yoghurts are horizontally grouped according to manufacturer. FAGE's yoghurts are on the left and DELTA's on the right. The Vertically, there is again a distinction between white yoghurts and the rest: white yoghurts occupy the well and the bottom shelf, fruit yoghurts, cereal yoghurts and children yoghurts the two middle shelves and desserts the top shelves.

In the other supermarket (**Fig. 3.18b**), yoghurts are horizontally grouped according to type. On the far left we can see the children yoghurts (DELTA/FAGE), then the fruit yoghurts and cereal yoghurts (FAGE/DELTA/MEVGAL), in the middle the white low fat (0% and 2%) yoghurts (FAGE/DELTA/MEVGAL), then the 4% (Agelados) yoghurts (FAGE/DELTA/MEVGAL) and on the right the strained yoghurts (FAGE/DELTA/MEVGAL).

supermarket (3.18a), yoghurts are displayed according to brand: DELTA on the right and FAGE on the left. In the second supermarket, the manufacturer is no longer the main criterion for categorisation. Yoghurts are categorised according to other criteria such as the type of yoghurt (strained or set), the flavour (white or fruit), or the target group (e.g. yoghurts for children). Fat content is also given more priority than the brand. In Figure 3.18b from right to left are first the strained yoghurts, then the set yoghurts (4%, 2% and 0% fat), the fruit yoghurts, the yoghurts for children and the desserts.

The configuration of power between manufacturers and retailers determines the extent to which each side has a say in product categorisation and in the promotion of certain cultural categories at the expense of others. The more power retailers have, the more they can impose their own interpretations of consumers' needs and their own categorising principles. Once the products enter retail space and through the re-ordering of the shelves according to type rather than brand, the most important organising principle in the world of manufacturing, the brand, takes a secondary role. Whereas the companies compete about which loves consumers the most and takes better care of them, retailers promote their own point of view, always in the name of the consumer.

Until now, I have examined the ordering of products on the shelves following the horizontal axis. What are the principles of classification when we examine the shelves vertically? According to the theory of visual merchandising, vertical space should be used for different sizes of products- smallest at the top, largest at the bottom. Also, the best selling lines are those just below eye-level and, especially in the refrigerated sections, the well (i.e. the bottom of an L-shaped fridge). In the 1997 photo (Fig. 3.15b), the milks are vertically ordered according to size and then according to fat content. Starting from the bottom upwards are the 2 litre milks (in the well), the 1 litre full-fat milks (blue), the 1 litre semi-skimmed milks (green), and the 1/2 litre milks of all fat categories. Finally, the two top shelves accommodate chocolate milk, coffee milk, butter milk and dairy cream. The distinction between white and flavoured milk is obvious and can be represented through a straight horizontal line that separates the shelf section into two parts.

The distinction between white and flavoured becomes even more apparent in the yoghurt section (Fig. 3.16b), which is divided into two horizontal parts: the lower part which contains the white yoghurts and the upper part which contains the fruit yoghurts and the desserts. As merchandisers explained, faithful to the basic rule of merchandising they position the fast-moving products in the best selling positions[64]. Consequently, the most popular yoghurts, which are the white yoghurts, are displayed in the well and on the shelves below eye-level. Fruit yoghurts and desserts are normally placed on the upper shelves except when they are newly launched and need special promotion. But even in this case they are never placed in the well.

Through the clear demarcation between white and fruit yoghurts, the mode of display on the shelf succeeds in reproducing a distinction that permeates yoghurt manufacturing in the most fundamental way. As we saw earlier, the white/flavoured distinction corresponds to oppositions such as staple versus delicatessen, health versus pleasure, seriousness versus fun. Once dairy products enter retail space, this fundamental distinction gets reproduced because it is in the interest of the retailer to reproduce it.

3.3.6 Conclusion

In this section I tried to demonstrate how the power balance between manufacturers and retailers finds material expression in the way milk and yoghurt are categorised and displayed. In the 1990s, due to the rapid growth of the food retail sector, manufacturers and retailers were in a state of continuing disputes and negotiations. The gradual shift of power from the former to the latter finds material expression in modes of ordering on the shelves.

Modes of ordering constitute cultural as much as economic practice. Both manufacturers and retailers order commodities according to their economic interests. At the same time, they define and reproduce cultural categories. For example, manufacturers downplay the distinction between sheep's milk and cow's milk because their whole dairy production is based on cow's milk (sheep's milk

[64] Profit maximisation is achieved if the best selling positions are assigned to goods with a big profit margin and a high rate of sale

would be insufficient and expensive), and redefine the boundaries between the traditional and the modern according to their own contribution to dairy production (e.g. diet and fruit yoghurts). In a similar way, retailers impose an ordering principle (the product type) that facilitates the management of a product category and enhances their profits from the category as a whole, but at the same time limits the dominance of the brand. The ordering of commodities plays, therefore, an important role in objectifying and shaping cultural categories as much as it shapes economic relations.

3.4 PART THREE

Cheese Retailing

With a focus on cheese, this section examines the process of power transfer which takes place in the reverse way, i.e. from retailers to manufacturers. If we visualise a continuum of the configuration of power relations between manufacturers and retailers, which starts with the dominance of the manufacturer and ends with the dominance of the retailer, the corner shop (Part 1) stands at the former end as manufacturers almost entirely control retail space, milk and yoghurt in the supermarket (Part 2) stands in the middle as both manufacturers and retailers are equally powerful players, and cheese in the supermarket (part 3) stands at the other end, where manufacturers gradually gain power at the expense of retailers. This section focuses on the efforts of the big dairy companies to introduce and promote branded cheese, which today has a market share of no more than 10% of total cheese sales. It also examines the role of the retailer in producing and reproducing cultural categories through cheese assortment, display and selling techniques. The main focus will be the cheese counter in supermarkets, which constitutes the main site for cheese purchasing for the urban consumer (Fig. 3.19). The cheese counter enables the retailer to develop a high degree of initiative when it comes to the selection of cheeses, modes of display, and promotion through personal contact with customers. Besides supermarkets, some cheese selling is carried out by small shops that specialise in cheese. Small food shops such as *pantopoleía* and *bakálika* may also sell certain cheeses but normally in limited variety.

In what follows, I describe the efforts undertaken by the dairy companies to promote branded and packaged cheese. The penetration of the manufacturers into the supermarket started with branded packaged cheese, which was initially displayed only on the shelves of the fridge cabinet, but which also gradually started to colonise the cheese counter. Companies were quick to realise that the only way to gain market share in the cheese market was to attack the cheese counter, i.e. to sell unpackaged branded cheese and thus become incorporated into the already existing structure of cheese supplying.

Figures 3.19 and 3.20

Figure 3.19 (above) The cheese counter
In Athens, the cheese counter in supermarkets is the main site for cheese purchasing. In big supermarkets, cheese counters are normally long and contain a wide variety of Greek and foreign cheeses.

Figure 3.20 (below) Branded cheese at the cheese counter
Branded cheese is also sold in bulk at the cheese counter: on the left, semi-hard branded cheese: FAGE's TRIKALINO (lit. from Trikala), MEVGAL's semi-hard MAKEDONIKO (lit. from Macedonia) and TO PARADOSIAKO (lit. the traditional) of KOLIOS. Brand cheese often bears brand names that are remiscent of geographical locations.

3.4.1 Cheese suppliers and branded[65] cheese in supermarkets

Cheese production is one of the most fragmented sectors of the economy. Normally, retailers come in direct contact with cheese producers and look for standardised production and guaranteed supply. According to a retail executive, suppliers are usually sought for in areas that have a tradition in the production of particular cheeses. For example, Epirus is a good area for the supply of graviera, Central Greece for kefalotiri, the Peloponnese for barrel feta. At the cheese counter, the area of origin is always indicated and consumers distinguish the cheeses according to the place of origin. Normally, the chain buys in advance the total annual produce of a cheese producer. This system enables retailers to offer cheeses at lower prices. Supermarkets advertise their offers in newspapers, on radio, sometimes on TV, in flyers inside the shop, at the cheese counter (Fig. 3.21) but also on the supermarket windows.

Normally, there is only one supplier for every cheese. There are some cheeses, however, that retailers buy from various producers. Feta is the most characteristic example, as it sells in big quantities and comes in different varieties. The chain SKLAVENITIS, for example, had in 1997 at the same time three to four different suppliers for barrel feta alone. Most retailers said that they keep steady suppliers because over the years they know what to expect. They are used to the way particular cheeses behave, and they can manage them better so as to achieve standard quality. Moreover, as an executive of SKLAVENITIS remarked, a constant change of suppliers deprives the supermarket of an identity and it loses its customers. Consumers identify cheeses by their area of origin but alternatively they also refer to the retailer. They say, for example, that the feta in SKLAVENITIS is good. Or SKLAVENITIS has a good feta. The retailer's name functions here as the place of origin that provides the cheese with an identity.

Until 1991, milk was subject to price control and the big dairy manufacturers were not interested in the cheese market. It was only after protectionist measures were

[65] The term 'branded' refers to manufacturers' brands rather than retail own brands, of which at the time of fieldwork very few were available.

Figure 3.21 and 3.22

Figure 3.21 (above) Hard cheese at the cheese counter
The hard cheese section takes up most of the space of the cheese counter and includes types of cheese, such as graviera, kafalograviera and kefalotiri. Above the counter, the white and red posters are the day's promotions of unbranded cheese: semi-hard cheese from Elassona (Central Greece) and graviera from Arta (NW Greece). The baskets on the counter are used for pre-grated cheese, such as kefalotiri and regato.

Figure 3.22 (below) Dividing the main cheese categories at the counter
Delicatessen cheeses are used as boundary markers between the main catagories of staple cheese. Here the foreign cheeses Roquefort and Blue Cheese are placed in between the white and the hard cheese sections. Note the inscription 'Feta' on the red border over the white section. Feta is identified with the white section and it is often used to attract customers to the cheese counter.

lifted that they started to invest in cheese. The first company to package feta and kaseri and advertise them nationwide was KOLIOS, a middle-sized company of northern Greece with a long history in cheese production. But it was only after FAGE entered the cheese market that, through intense advertising, branded packaged cheese became more widely known among consumers.

The first cheese launched by FAGE was the kaseri-type TRIKALINO manufactured in a cheese dairy in Trikala, Central Greece[66]. The fact that its name was chosen to remind people of the area of production reflects the strong association of cheese with locality that manufacturers saw it in their interest to reproduce. After TRIKALINO, FAGE invested in a variety of cheeses, such as cottage cheese (FLAIR), gouda and edam (HOLLANDA), and a graviera-type cheese brand named PLAGIA. In 1995, FAGE entered the feta market. Feta as a traditional cheese made from sheep milk required a relatively bigger investment and the renovation of a cheese dairy in northwest Greece. FAGE feta was intensely promoted; in 1995 FAGE's expenditure on cheese advertising amounted to almost 30% of total cheese advertising on Greek television[67]. Also, for the first time the advertising expenditure for Greek cheeses exceeded that for foreign. FAGE's entry into the feta market was of particular importance because for the first time a big dairy company produced a traditional Greek cheese. After feta, FAGE launched two other traditional cheeses: graviera Kritis (1995) and kefalotiri (1998).

In the last decade, many dairy companies have produced branded cheeses. The northern Greek company MEVGAL is one of them. MEVGAL is today's leader in the market of branded cheese, offering a rich variety of traditional Greek cheeses: feta, manouri, anthotiro, telemes and kaseri among others. Other companies that have become known to the Athenians for their cheeses are DODONI and EPIROS (both companies are situated in Epirus, NW Greece) and TYRAS (Central Greece), to

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[66] TRIKALINO was produced from cow's milk and was cheaper than the traditional kaseri which was made from sheep-and-goat milk. It was only after 1994, when the competition became harder and the regulation concerning the specifications of traditional cheeses was strictly enforced, that FAGE no longer allowed to use the term 'kaseri' and was instead forced to promote TRIKALINO as *imískliro* (lit. semi-hard) cheese. The same thing happened with all cheese producers who used to give to their cow cheeses names that belonged to traditional Greek sheep cheeses. The kaseri-type cheese was renamed *imískliro* (semi-hard), the kefalotiri-type cheese *skliró* (hard), and the feta-type cheese *lefkó tirí* (white cheese).

[67] The figure was provided for me by FAGE's cheese marketing manager.

mention only the best-known. DODONI concentrated their efforts especially in the promotion of DODONI feta, the distinctive characteristic of which is the company's logo embossed on the cheese as a 'stamp of authenticity'.

When FAGE decided to enter into the cheese market, which at the time was sold loose (*khíma*) (as opposed to packaged) at the counter, they were confronted with one big difficulty: their salesmen were not trained to sell loose and negotiate on the spot. As FAGE's marketing manager put it,

> loose selling requires trained salesmen and FAGE did not have them. Loose selling involves lots of bargaining, it's a messy job, takes up time. There are also distribution problems involved.

FAGE entered the cheese market with a packaged kaseri-type cheese made from cow's milk, in the hope that its cheaper price compared to the (unpackaged) kaseri made from ewe's milk would ensure a good market share. In this way, the company hoped to attract customers away from the cheese counter towards packaged cheese.

Despite the advertising efforts the market share of packaged cheese remained low, and at the time of fieldwork in 1997 it did not exceed 8%. Eventually, all the big dairy companies that produced branded cheese (FAGE, MEVGAL, DODONI, KOLIOS, TYRAS, EPIRUS) started selling it to retailers unpacked, in tins or round blocks depending on the type of cheese[68]. In this way, and despite their wide distribution network and well-known reputation, the big manufacturers voluntarily entered into the system of whole-selling. At the same time through advertising they tried to reduce their dependence on the retailer by creating demand for their products. Once the brands invaded the counter, their presence gradually started to increase. The higher their market share, the more the space they took up at the counter. As is evident in Figure 3.20 branded cheese has expanded not only inside the counter but also on top.

Using the power that retailers had through personal contact with their customers at the cheese counter, they delayed as much as possible the penetration of the brands.

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[68] Softer white cheeses such as feta come in tins, while hard yellow cheeses such as graviera in big round blocks.

A chain executive of SKLAVENITIS admitted in 1997 that when KOLIOS first advertised commercialised (*tipopoiiméni* - lit. standardised) feta and kaseri, they discouraged consumers from buying it because they wanted to protect the sector, i.e. the small cheese dairies that can not compete with the big industry, and the consumer who benefits from non-industrialised, higher quality cheeses:

> Regarding standardised cheeses, people ask for them because of TV advertising. From the time when KOLIOS started with standardised cheese, we wanted to protect people. When the customer asked for KOLIOS, we dissuaded him from buying. We can not reverse the process of feta's standardisation, but we can delay it. And we are successful because our scepticism makes customers think. They have trust in us; they say that these guys must know something that we don't. And in this way they keep their eyes open when they buy standardised cheese.

He also explained that supermarkets do not directly lose from selling branded cheese. It is managing cheeses and displaying them at the counter that involves a high cost which minimises their profits. They need to have a high turn-over in order to make a substantial profit. On the other hand, branded cheese is expensive and consumers treat expensive cheeses as delicatessen. With a low turn-over, retailers can not cover management costs and come out with a good profit.

Through intensive promotion the market share of branded cheese has been steadily increasing. Still, packaged cheese does not enjoy much popularity. There are many reasons to account for consumers' resistance to packaged cheese. One is the fact that packaged cheese is associated with small quantity. As an executive of the chain METRO explained, Greek families are used to buying loose cheese in big quantities because they consume it as part of the meal. European families prefer packaged cheese of 200 gr. or 500 gr. because they eat it as dessert[69]. As some informants/consumers commented, packaged cheese is good only for holidays. There is, indeed, an increase in the sales of packaged cheese in the summer when most Athenians go on holiday[70].

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[69] Galaktokomia 1999:52
[70] Galaktokomia 1999:50

Another important reason that consumers prefer the counter is that they feel that they get 'fresher' cheese. As a young informant put it, loose cheese lasts longer:

> Informant: I am under the impression that people go for the loose [cheese]. I believe the loose is fresher, while packaged cheeses have already been packaged for some time. The loose has a longer lifespan, and I have seen that myself, I have bought packaged and it went off very fast.
> Petridou: Do you find that loose cheese tastes better?
> Informant: No, if it is the same cheese, packaged or loose it will taste the same.

Retailers have capitalised on the concept of freshness which is associated with the counter. As packaged cheese slowly but gradually gains ground, retailers are looking for ways to retain market share by promoting the cheeses they package themselves as 'fresher'. Their argument is based on the ground that their cheeses are 'freshly' packaged at the counter and are aimed at providing the customer with a more convenient and quick way of purchasing. What they do is to pre-wrap in cellophane the most popular cheeses, stick the label of the chain on them, and place them either on top of the counter or in the fridge cabinet next to the brands.

There are degrees of packaging by the retailer. Pre-cut and pre-grated cheeses which are supposed to save time for both the assistant and the consumer are not always retail-labelled. There is also so-called 'fresh packaging', which involves the placement of retail-labelled cheeses in the fridge cabinets next to the brands. In 1997, only one chain (TROFO) had gone further to introduce a private retail label for packaged cheese (FREKO). FREKO is a retail brand used for cheeses that are quality controlled, cut and packaged in a central unit, and then delivered to the stores of the chain. As branded packaged cheese is more expensive than the unbranded, retailers feel that they can contribute so that consumers get good quality cheese at a lower price[71]. As a retail executive pointed out, graviera costs 2,500 drachmas per kg loose and 3,000 drachmas packaged, while the cost of packaging does not exceed 150-200 drachmas.

The competition between retailers and manufacturers in the market of cheese had as a result the blurring of the boundaries of traditional categories that were associated

[71] Galaktokomia 1997:64

with designated spaces inside a supermarket. The counter stands for more traditional forms of retailing. It was, after all, the demolition of the counter and the transition to self-service that gave the supermarkets a cost advantage over the traditional corner shops (Gardner and Sheppard 1989:154). Another implication of the transition to self-service in combination with advertising was the displacing of a salesforce (Bluestone et al 1981) and the transition of knowledge from the retailer to the consumer, which in turn had as a result the de-skilling of the retail workforce (Fine 1995:147). The counter constitutes, therefore, a space where traditional forms of retailing, such as personal service, no direct access to the goods on display and the seeking of advice from the knowledgeable shopkeeper/assistant have survived inside the supermarket. With the penetration of the brands into the cheese counter, the role of the knowledgeable salesman becomes gradually redundant as information becomes available through advertising: advertising changes the role of the assistant from a person who has power to shape knowledge and influence consumer preferences to a manual worker who serves the customer (and the manufacturer) by cutting the branded cheese into the specified quantity.

In their effort to gain market share in the cheese market, the big dairy manufacturers directed their efforts to the counter, which was a domain of absolute power for the retailer. Attacking the counter with branded cheese was their way of penetrating the market and undermining retail power - a process that, it should be noted, has been rather slow but, all the same, gradual and with good future prospects.

3.4.2. (Re)producing cultural categories at the cheese counter

Mr Yannis was working for twelve years at the cheese counter where I conducted fieldwork. He was in good relations with the customers and they often asked his opinion. Customers would not always name a particular cheese, but describe their wishes and let him decide which was the most appropriate cheese for them. They would ask for cheese for pizza or cheese that melts. Or they would specify that they needed a cheese for pasta or a cheese for grating. In one case the customer asked for cheese for toast. Mr Yannis offered gouda. The customer enquired about emmental. 'No', said Mr Yannis, 'emmental is not for toast, gouda is'.

At the cheese counter, customers find out about different cheese varieties and their uses. Through this process, cheese categories emerge and are communicated to consumers. There are three ways in which retailers shape knowledge about cheeses. One is the selection and variety of cheeses, the second is the way they are categorised and displayed, and the third the personal communication between salesman and consumer. Supermarkets try to have a wide collection of cheeses. The cheese counter constitutes an element of prestige for the store. A big supermarket is expected to have a wide variety of cheeses and a well attended, nicely decorated counter. Of course, the quality of the display as well as the size of the collection depend on the strategy of the supermarket and their target group. Still, all the chains are expected to have a decent cheese counter, and its size mainly depends on the size of the store.

Which cheeses are displayed at a Greek supermarket and what is the organising principle behind their display? Not all supermarkets display their cheeses in the same way. There are, however, some basic principles of categorisation that Greek consumers normally expect to find. This is how the group executive of VEROPOULOS explained the pattern based on which cheeses are displayed at the counter:

> At the counter cheeses are divided into 'the white' (*ta lefká*), next to them 'the hard' (*ta sklirá*) and then 'the yellow' (*ta kítrina*). Most of the yellow are imported. Between the hard and the yellow we place cheeses-delicatessen, i.e. special cheeses of all types, Greek and foreign, which are not clear categories. For example, metsovone which is smoked, graviera from Syros that has a special taste that resembles that of parmesana, cheeses with walnuts, garlic etc. We put them in between the main categories for aesthetic reasons but also because if we put them at the side nobody would buy them because they are expensive, they are delicatessen.

The first important conclusion to be drawn from this excerpt is that cheese in Greece is more associated with everyday diet rather than the exotic status of the delicatessen. The three main categories of cheese (white, hard, and yellow) mentioned in the excerpt refer to cheese as staple. Delicatessen are purchased in smaller quantities by a smaller percentage of the population. These cheeses are placed at the counter in between the big staple categories. In Figure 3.22 Roquefort

and the other similar cheeses are used as a border marker between the white and the hard cheeses.

Another important issue about the display is the clear divide between the 'white' and 'yellow' categories. The 'yellow' category refers to imported cheeses such gouda, edam and emmental, which are very popular in Greece, and which have a deep yellow-orange colour. This category is juxtaposed to 'white' cheeses, which are the fresh local cheeses such as feta, manouri, telemes, mizithra, anthotiros and others (Fig. 3.23). Most of these cheeses owe their white colour to sheep's milk, whereas imported cheeses are principally made from cow's milk. According to the executive's description, the two opposing categories (white-Greek and yellow-imported) occupy the two ends of the counter. Between them lies the larger in size cheese category, 'the hard' (*ta sklirá*) (Fig. 3.21). 'The hard' are Greek cheeses with yellow colour, which is usually not as strong as the deep yellow of the imported. They are called 'hard' because their hard texture is what mainly distinguishes them from the other two categories. This category comprises a great number of cheeses which are mainly variations of graviera, kefalograviera and kefalotiri.

The three basic categories mainly refer to cheese as a staple food and correspond, with few exceptions, to the three different modes in which cheese is consumed in the household: fresh as a meal accompaniment, melted, and grated. Cheeses belonging to the white category are normally served fresh; 'hard' cheeses are normally salty and are used for grating; and the 'yellow' are soft sweet cheeses used for melting. The most important exception to this rule is sweet graviera (such as graviera Naxou) which belongs to the 'hard' category but is usually served fresh.

The white section is designed around the 'queen' of the Greek cheeses: feta. One or sometimes two barrels of feta are accommodated within the cheese counter and the cheese is sold straight from the barrel. From the time of the production of barrel feta until the time of its consumption, a whole year might elapse. Therefore, the texture and taste of barrel feta can not be predicted with precision. When one day I visited the cheese counter, Mr Yannis opened a new barrel of feta. 'This one is soft', he said.

Figure 3.23 The white cheese section at the counter

3.23a (above) and 3.23b (below)
The white cheese section in two different supermarkets. Feta is sold either from the barrel or from the tin. In **Fig. 3.23b**, the counter contains two barrels of feta so that customers can have a choice of softer or harder texture. Square pieces of tin feta are piled up in front of the barrel on the right. In front of the barrel on the left, are triangular pieces of insalted fresh mizithra. The bucket with the inscription 'Flair' contains FAGE's cottage cheese (also available in small packaging on the shelves). On top of the counter the plastic white pots are filled with strained yoghurt by the counter assistant. The round cheeses in **Fig. 3.23a,** which are used for a nice decor, are dried salted mizithra.

'They made it a year ago, you don't know how it will turn out. In every 100 barrels, 90 contain hard feta. And in every 100 customers, 98 ask for hard feta. But then', I asked, 'how will this feta be sold? It will, don't worry' he answered. 'It always does'. Each time a customer asked for barrel feta, Mr Yannis warned that this particular one was soft. Quite often, if customers did not want soft feta, they went for tin feta[72] or Kalathaki Limnou which is a special feta variety produced on the island of Limnos. Others did not mind and insisted on barrel feta. They said 'I don't care if it's soft as long as it's from the barrel!' And Mr Yannis would then comment: 'Barrel feta has a different charm' (*i varelísia ékhei álli khári*).

Feta dominates the white section of the cheese counter. The white section accounts for 60% of the total sales of cheese and feta alone for 30-35%[73]. Feta is the cheese that brings the customer to the counter. Barrel feta, which is the type of feta that attracts most consumers, can not be easily packaged and placed on the shelf because it contains too much liquid and crumbles when cut. Because retailers are aware that feta drives the customer to the cheese counter, they often situate the white section at the far side of the counter, with the intention of making the customer walk along the long display of cheeses. The concept of 'flow' is central to self-service and supermarketing and involves a number of techniques for enticing the consumer deep into the store while situating impulse buys along the way (see Humphery 1998:86). Careful placing of basic demand lines helps to draw customers to all parts of the shop.

Feta not only brings customers to the counter but even more importantly it brings them into the supermarket. According to a retail executive (SKLAVENITIS chain), out of all the products sold at a supermarket, feta sells the highest volume while evaporated milk sells the highest number of units. Feta does not leave much profit to the retailer because it requires constant tending all day long, a lot of display

[72] It is against the unpredictability of barrel feta that tin feta (i.e. feta produced in metal containers) plays a complementary role. Varieties of tin feta (which is usually harder and slightly more expensive) are also available at the counter. Branded feta, for example, is always produced in tins and is promoted for its standard quality and taste.
[73] Galaktokomia 1997:66

space, and constant renewal[74], but it is important because it brings the customer into the store.

At the 'white' side of the counter, customers also expect to find traditional yoghurt, the so-called bag-yoghurt (*yaoúrti sakoúlas*) which is sold loose. Branded strained yoghurt is also available (by companies such as FAGE, MEVGAL, RIGAS etc.) but it is in tins of 9 kg and the customer gets the amount (s)he requires in a white plastic pot which is filled on the spot. Sometimes, as with grated cheese, assistants fill the plastic pots in advance to place them on top of the counter for direct service (Fig. 3.23b).

In this section, I have argued that in the case of cheese the power balance between manufacturer and retailer has been in favour of the latter due to the highly fragmented cheese production and price control that kept the big dairy manufacturers away from the cheese market. In the beginning of the 1990s, branded packaged cheese made its entry into the supermarket shelves. Due to the unpopularity of packaged cheese, the interest of the manufacturers soon turned to the cheese counter, where retailers had more power. Gradually branded cheese started to invade the cheese counter. At the same time, in an effort to keep their dominant role in cheese, retailers entered into the market of packaged cheese through the system of 'fresh packaging', making use of the association of the counter with 'freshness'.

The cheese counter represents a traditional form of retailing. Goods are on display, not within direct access but with the possibility of tasting, while the assistant offers personal service to the customer. What is more, the cheeses offered at the counter are identified by place of origin rather than by cheese producer, reflecting the importance of the area of origin rather than the manufacturer or the brand. The penetration of brands into the space of the counter blurred category boundaries. The cheese counter today increasingly accommodates a variety of brands (e.g. FAGE feta, or DODONI feta), which are promoted through advertising, and through which manufacturers seek to control a market predominantly controlled by retailers.

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[74] Unlike the rest of the cheeses, feta is supplied twice a week. Imported cheese can be stocked for one month.

Still, the retailer holds considerable power in producing knowledge about cheeses through selection, display and the advice provided by the assistant. The first thing to note is that the distinction between cheese as staple and cheese as delicatessen is reproduced in the mode of display of the cheeses at the counter through the formation of three main categories of staple cheeses and the use of the deli varieties as boundary markers between the main categories. The three main categories (white, hard and yellow) represent three different forms of cheese consumption in the household. White cheeses are normally eaten fresh, hard salty cheeses are used for grating (pasta, etc.) and yellow cheeses for melting (pizza, toast, etc.).

Finally, cheeses are distinguished as Greek and foreign. Greek cheeses are normally made from sheep-and-goat milk while imported cheeses are with very few exceptions made from cow's milk. Foreign cheeses are not necessarily identified with the category delicatessen. French cheeses are normally considered as delicatessen but other foreign cheeses such as gouda, edam or emmental have been incorporated into the Greek diet as staple. They form the 'yellow' category, the semi-soft cheeses that melt, and to an extent they have replaced the Greek traditional kaseri which, being more expensive, has gradually lost most of its popularity.

Kaseri, like many other Greek PDO cheeses (Products of Denominated Origin) or Greek POPs (*Prostatevómeni Onomasía Proélefsis*) are made from ewe's milk and are more expensive than cheeses made from cow's milk. The PDO list includes popular Greek cheeses such as feta[75], kaseri, mizithra and graviera, the protection of which meant stricter controls to ensure that they contained exclusively sheep-and-goat milk. As the price of sheep-and-goat milk has been steadily increasing since 1994, Greek cheeses are becoming more and more expensive. As a retail manager put it, 'the prices of POP cheeses today are very high for the Greek consumer. Educating the consumer is not enough if prices do not come down'[76].

Supermarkets, especially the up-market ones, saw a good marketing opportunity in the concept of PDO. Traditional cheeses were used as a marketing technique for

[75] Until 1999 feta was a Product of Denominated Origin.
[76] Galaktokomia 1997:60

retail promotion. They set out to educate their customers. In 1997, over the elaborate cheese counter' of a VASILOPOULOS supermarket hang a long list of Greek traditional cheeses. It was stated that 17 traditional Greek cheeses had been protected in the EU and all of them were present at the cheese counter. Apart from the list over the cheese counter, VASILOPOULOS printed a leaflet which was available at the store's entrance introducing the cheeses and their origins.

According to the retailers, supermarkets have played an important role in keeping the traditional Greek cheeses at a low price. In recent years and in view of the Monetary Union the Greek government has exerted a lot of pressure on the food industry to keep inflation low. The result is that the retail profit from Greek cheeses has been considerably reduced. 'The consumer has only slightly felt the price difference because the increase has mostly been absorbed by the supermakets. They had to do that because of the pressure to keep down inflation and because the cheeses were becoming too expensive for the consumer'[77].

Imported yellow cheeses steadily gained market share. In 1999, imported cheeses covered 25% of the market[78]. A large part of their increasing popularity is attributed to their lower price. As an executive of the METRO supermarket chain put it, referring to the need to promote PDOs, 'if these cheeses are available in the market in normal prices, the Greek consumer will show preference for them for their unique taste, which imported cheeses do not have... These cheeses should be advertised... Their producers should be educated... Our cheeses are our wealth...'[79]. With the constant increase of the cheaper imported cheeses made from ultrafiltrated cow milk in 24 hours (Kitrilakis and Kitrilakis 2000), it will not be surprising in a few years time to see Greek cheeses in Greece acquiring the status of delicatessen.

[77] Galaktokomia 1997:66
[78] Galaktokomia 1999:48
[79] Galaktokomia 1999:52

3.5 CONCLUSION

Dairy Products as Material Expression of Power Relations between Manufacturers and Retailers

There have been many approaches to the cultural implications of the increasing power of retailers at the expense of manufacturers. Some studies have focused on the introduction of new food concepts (such (as chilled meals) as retailer-led innovations, others on own-labels, and others on the way retailing is used to reproduce social distinctions based on gender, age or income. My approach of the cultural implications of the power configuration between retailers and manufacturers takes as starting point a group of commodities and traces the mode of their display within retail space. All three sections in this chapter had as central point of reference the negotiation of power through the use of space for the ordering and display of dairy products. In the first section, the relation of power, which is clearly on the side of the manufacturer, becomes materialised through the prominence of the brand inside and outside the corner shop. Through fridges, used for the display of dairy products, lit-signs, posters and other material, the dairy companies appropriate the space of the small shop and use it as an extension of competitive manufacturing structures. In turn, the small shop cooperates with the manufacturers, using the power of the brand in order to attract customers.

The second section examines the relation of power between manufacturers and supermarket chains as this is shaped in the domain of pasteurised milk and yoghurt. Here, the dairy companies emerge as powerful players who start to feel the pressure of a new emerging economic power in the food sector. In the 1990s, the rapid growth of retail capital in Greece through internal development as well as acquisitions and foreign alliances has squeezed the profit margins of the big dairy companies. Retailers are gradually acquiring more negotiating power over the amount of space allocated to each dairy product (milk and yoghurt) and the principles according to which dairy products should be displayed. Through management practices such as Category Management, the retailer emerges as a powerful player in determining cultural categories through the categorisation of food and through the promotion of the retailer's point of view in what Bourdieu called 'classification struggles'.

The need for a separate section for cheese (Part Three) was dictated by the different chain of provision between pasteurised milk/yoghurt and cheese. While the former are manufactured by mainly three big dairy companies, cheese production is highly fragmented and spread all over the country. As a result, retailers operate as promoters of cheeses in the urban centres, while through the service counter they have the power of shaping consumer knowledge around cheese. It is only in the last decade, and after price controls were lifted, that the big dairy manufacturers started to invest in the production of branded cheese. They entered the market with packaged cheese on the shelves but soon realised that the only way to make their products known to the wide public was through the cheese counter, which like the corner shop became a field of invasion and competition between the brands. The role of the retailer as shaper of knowledge was confined as advertising produced knowledge as well as the demand pull of branded cheese. Still, the mode of display of cheeses is in itself a field of production of culture through principles of ordering such as colour, texture, household use and national origin. These categories will emerge again in the last chapter of the thesis, where patterns of cheese consumption are examined and contrasted.

CHAPTER 4

CONSUMING DAIRY PRODUCTS

The material used in this chapter was selected during visits to the families of rural immigrants from Crete living in Athens, as well as native Athenians born and brought up in the capital for at least two generations. The first section focuses exclusively on the Cretan immigrants and on the way food consumption in their households is structured through the experience of migration. The role of cheese in this context is significant as it is one of the main foods that embodies the experience of *tópos*, a term that encompasses both the physicality of a place and its symbolic value[80], and has a prominent position in the food provisions from the village. Given that more than half of the urban population in Greece are post-war rural immigrants, the case of the Cretans in Athens touches upon issues that are of a much wider concern for patterns of food provisioning and consumption in the city.

In the remainder of the chapter I have taken dairy products themselves as a starting point for the study of social distinctions. Each of the remaining three sections corresponds to a different dairy product, namely butter (part 2), cheese (part 3) and milk/yoghurt (part 4). The reason for this division is that there are different issues associated with the consumption of each product, with the exception of milk and yoghurt, which are studied together. In the section of butter it turned out that its opposing relationship to olive oil and its significance in Greek culture had a significant impact on butter's symbolic connotations. The third section explores cheese as a materialisation of cultural constructions of *tópos*. Here, the material used derives from interviews with native Athenians with an emphasis on the role of cheese in the imagination of the rural. Finally, the fourth section is dedicated to issues arising from the consumption of milk and yoghurt. More than the other products, milk and yoghurt attracted concerns about food adulteration and provided a good starting point for the study of beliefs about food commercialisation and the way it is expressed through folk classifications of food.

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[80] For definition of *tópos* see Chapter 1.

4.1 PART ONE

The Taste of Crete

In a 1995 TV advertisement, in which the Greek dairy industry (FAGE) made its first efforts to promote branded and packaged traditional Greek cheeses, two Cretans donning the *vráka* (breech) and the *mandíli* (Cretan male head-dress) were shown conversing in the local dialect:

> -See, *síntekne*[81], how times change? Would you ever have imagined a tastier Cretan graviera than the one Manousos makes?
> -Who made it, this tasty thing?
>
> Voice-over:
> FAGE. In Crete in a traditional dairy FAGE produces genuine Cretan graviera. Made traditionally from 100% goat-sheep milk, GRAVIERA KRITIS has a superb taste and the standard quality of FAGE. GRAVIERA KRITIS FAGE. Don't look for a better graviera.
>
> -What do you say (*ínta les morê*), let's send some to the boys (*kopélia*) in Athens.
> -Are you crazy (*kouzouláthikes*)? FAGE is everywhere.

In the first chapter, *tópos*, as a term that encompasses both the physicality of a place and its symbolic value, was used with reference to the nation. In this section, *tópos* will be approached from another perspective: rather than relating to national territory, *tópos* here will be used to refer to the 'small fatherland' (*mikrí patrídha*; cf. Campbell 1983:193) of thousands of migrants who left their villages from the 1950s until well into the 1970s in search for a better life in the city. For many years, the relationship between the village household and the migrants has been one of mutual reciprocity: while manufactured goods and money are channelled to the village, food is channelled in the opposite direction. When I conducted my research in the 1990s looking for patterns of consumption of dairy products in Athens, *tópos* emerged as a significant source of food provisioning in the city. By focusing on immigrants in Athens from the island of Crete, my wish here is to highlight what the implications of this massive migration are thirty years later for patterns of food

[81] *Sínteknos* literally denotes the godfather of one's child (spiritual kinship through baptism) but it is often used to address a friend.

consumption in the city, and how food from *tópos* informs understandings of social distinction as well as change.

Migration has long permeated historic experience in Greece. During the 19th as well as the 20th centuries, significant alterations in the economic patterns of the nation directed a considerable percentage of the Greek population, especially from rural areas, towards emigration to urban centres or abroad (cf. Emke-Poulopoulou 1986; Buck Sutton 1983). Migration in Greece was the result of an economically underdeveloped and politically dependent nation (Mouzelis 1978). As Mouzelis argues, the lack of a balanced internal economic development and the dependence on foreign investment led to conditions of 'underdevelopment', an expression of which was the high level of internal and external migration.

Giving a comprehensive account of migration patterns in Greece, Susan Buck Sutton (1983) writes that, since the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s, which culminated in the founding of the Greek state in 1830, there has been an increasing centralisation of administrative, economic and political power in the big urban centres (especially Athens and Thessaloniki). Following the founding of the Greek state, there was an increase in the power of central government and a gradual decrease in that of the local community. Migration was an integral part of this process, as it weakened rural areas even more through depopulation. Following the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the 1922 Asia Minor disaster, a series of voluntary and forced population exchanges constituted another major source of migrants. The need for redistribution of the national land (*ethnikés ghaíes*) became urgent. Successive land reforms prevented the formation of big land-ownership and led to the emergence of many small, unmechanised operations.

After World War II and the ensuing civil war, which had immense consequences for the countryside, migration in Greece involved a massive population transfer from rural areas to urban centres. Internal migration reached its peak in the 1960s and early 1970s. Athens attracted the majority of the migrants. Between 1951 and 1971, the population of the capital almost doubled[82] while between 1961 and 1971 the

[82] From 1,378,586 in 1951 to 2,530,207 in 1971 (Burgel 1976:19).

increase was bigger than the total population of both Thessaloniki and Patra, the two biggest Greek cities after Athens (Burgel 1976:19). Almost half the internal migration between 1956-61 and 1965-71 was directed toward Athens (Buck Sutton 1983:233) turning the capital into 'a heavy head on a weak body' (Burgel 1976:23). Through a mechanism of rural-urban reciprocity, city kin became a source for money and bearers of gifts of manufactured goods, while the family in the village reciprocated with food provisions (Buck Sutton 1983:241; Campbell 1983; Vermeulen 1983; cf. Simic 1973). In this way the family obtained access to both city and village resources, as the migrant became an urban extension of the village household.

The fragmentation of farm units and small land ownership based on family labour, that has survived in most parts of Greece, also characterises the way land is divided and farmed in Crete (Lazaridis 1995). Access to land and to products of agriculture and farming are not confined within a small segment of the population but are fragmented and often operated on a family basis. Many of the immigrants I visited in Athens made reference to their property (land) on the island mostly in association to olive trees and vine yards.

Such was the case of Nikos, who comes from a village in Kissamos, an area in the western part of Crete in the prefecture of Chania. With his wife, Nelly, they live in a flat in Pagkrati on the eastern side of Athens. Nikos, now in his fifties, grew up in Crete and left the island when he finished school. He came to Athens to find work and to support his mother and sister in the village. He got involved in tourism and gradually started his own business as a travel agent. In the early 1960s he got married to Nelly, whose parents were refugees from Asia Minor and came to Athens in 1922. They have two children, a newly married daughter, and a younger son who studies at the university.

Nikos often travels to Crete, up to 15 times a year, to see his mother and sister and also keep an eye on the family property. Every time he returns to Athens he brings back food:

> From Crete we bring great quantities of meat. Cheese. Fish. A lobster sometimes. Paksimádhia (rusks), olives, wine, *tsikoudhiá*[83]. We go 'down' to Crete (*katevaínoume*)[84] often. We have property there. Olive trees and so on. I have my mother there, and my sister. We are all very close (*eímaste polí dheménoi*).

Nikos believes that only the food he brings from Crete is really genuine (*ghnísio*) and unadulterated (*anóthefto*), and this for him constitutes an important difference between Crete and Athens. He took olive oil as an example:

> That is olive oil, genuine (*ghnísio*), picked up with my own hands! Let me tell you, my girl. The worst that has happened here in Athens is the bad quality of oil. These things are clear (*ksekatharisména prághmata*). The oil they sell here is industrialised. When it costs them 1,300-1,200 [drachmas per litre] and you find it in the market for 1,100 [drachmas], it goes without saying that the oil 'has suffered a kind of processing' (*ékhei páthei mia skhetikí epekserghasía*).

As the olive oil originates from his own land, it is not surprising that Nikos talks about it in terms of genuineness. But it was not only for olive oil that Nikos used this type of language. Talking about Cretan *piláfi*[85], he expressed the difference between the two places through terms such as wild goat or chicken, and rice that has not been processed. The fact that rice and meat are *bought* in Crete and as such have become part of a commercialised relationship of exchange did not seem to make any difference:

> Nikos: In Crete you buy rice in sacks. It is tastier compared to those in supermarkets here which have been chemically processed (*ta ékhoun epekserghasteí me khimiká*) and its starch (*kóla*) has been removed. [...] *Piláfi* derives its flavour mainly from the meat. They usually boil wild goat's meat.
> Petridou: I've heard that they also boil chicken.
> Nikos: Chicken, too. But not VOKTAS[86], they don't know it in Crete. They know the *alaniáriko*[87]...

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[83] *Tsikoudhiá* is a drink similar to grappa made from distilled grapes.
[84] Sutton (1994:243) argues that 'up' and 'down' expressions of this kind might involve more than a simple geographical indication by referring also to a relationship of backwardness and progress between the two places.
[85] *Piláfi* in the Cretan context is the rice boiled in meat juice (goat or wild chicken) with the addition of clarified butter (*stakovoùtiro*). *Piláfi* is the most festive dish in the Cretan cuisine.
[86] A brand of packaged chicken.
[87] Free-range, lit. gadabout.

The same point was made by another informant who said that her mother used to send her home-made food when she was younger, but she is now buying it in the village and sends it to her daughter. Argiro, in her sixties, comes from the village of Lousakies, which is a constellation of small villages, four kilometres from Kasteli. She lives with her husband, who is also from the area of Kissamos, in a house in Argiroupoli (a suburb in the south of Athens) which consists of three separate flats. The couple live on the first floor and have given the other two flats to their two children. From their daughter, who lives and works in Athens, they have two grandsons; from their son, who has migrated to the US, they have a granddaughter whom they see every summer when they all come to Greece for holidays.

When Argiro's mother in the village was younger, she was growing a variety of foods at home: olives, potatoes, onions, tomatoes; she also used to make *khilopítes*[88], cheese, butter, bread. She used to send them to her daughter but now she is not in a position to do this any more and she buys it in the village:

> When my mother was younger, she would send us everything from the village. Olive oil, we have our own olive trees and we still do, potatoes, onions, *khilopítes*, eggs... It was a house full of cheeses, butter, everything (*ítan éna spíti ghemáto me ta tiriá tou, ta voútirá tou, ta pánta*). Now she's grown old... However my mother still sends us *khilopítes*, onions; she buys them in the village.

Food that is bought in the village and sent as a gift is what Lupton (1996:47) has called 'a purchased commodity gift'. In my research among Greek students in London (Petridou forthcoming) I was surprised to find that a student agreed to use a sachet of mashed potato powder only when her friend assured her that it was brought from Greece. When I asked her to explain to me the difference between mashed potato powder packaged in Greece and the same item packaged in England, she said: 'Have you ever tried the potatoes here to see how they taste? What should I do? Bring raw potatoes from Greece?' This shows how in different contexts food from *tópos*, home grown or commercialised, is always believed to taste better and be more beneficial. It confirms the point made by Weiss (1996), that food and money should not be seen as icons of distinct spheres of exchange, as belonging to two different regimes of value. Their value is contextually determined, and within a

[88] A type of noodles.

certain context, home grown food and purchased food might belong in the same category.

Like Nikos, Argiro talked a lot about the purity and taste of the food in Crete. In terms of chicken, for example, the goodness of Crete meant that chickens are 'healthier', slower to boil, without hormones. The fact that chickens in Athens take only ten minutes to cook was for her proof that they contain hormones; in Crete chickens take more time to grow and more time to cook:

> The chickens we receive from Crete are healthier. They are harder, no matter how long you boil them, it's not like those 2-3 month-old birdies that get bigger with hormones over here. It takes 6 to 7 months to bring up a chicken in Crete - because they don't use hormones in villages, and the meat is hard. That chicken needs boiling for one and a half hours, while these chickens here are done in ten minutes.

The drawing of a social boundary based on the notion of (slow) process often emerges as an element of the distinction of the self from a commercialised and alienating other (cf. Weiss 1996). Among Greek students in London, the notion of process was fundamental in the way they experienced in their everyday life the difference between them and what they called 'the English'. The idea of food taking time to mature or be prepared was thought to be essential for the achievement of taste and nutritional value[89]. 'Tasteless' food was thought to be in character with an alienated society where appearance was more important than substance.

Related to this is also a perception of nature as untamed: the meat of the wild animal that is hard and takes long to cook, or the taste of olive oil that is bitter, or the 'real' Cretan yoghurt that is considered to be more sour. While inviting me to taste the food he had brought from Crete, Nikos was unsure whether I would like it. He explained that manufacturers adulterate the food and make its flavour milder in

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[89] The Greek language contains a striking parallel in the semantics of *tópos* and food. In modern Greek the word *nóstimos* (tasty) stems from the Homeric word *nóstos* which means return to the homeland (*epánodhos eis tin patrídha*). *Nóstimos* denotes the ability to return; it also attributes to somebody or something the quality of being pleasant, agreeable and tasty. As Seremetakis (1994:4) explains, *nóstimos* in modern Greek has come to characterise 'someone or something that has journeyed and arrived, has matured, ripened and is thus tasty'. Tasteless, in this context, is an equivalent of lacking substance, being meaningless. As stated in the Greek dictionary (Bostanjoglou 1990), *anostiá* (lack of taste, tastelessness) bears also the meaning of *anousiótis* (lack of substance, lack of meaning).

order to adjust it to the taste of the urbanites who are not exposed to what nature really tastes like.

Argiro's 36-year-old son, who has migrated to the US, has created great confusion in his mother's system of beliefs. He told her about environmental tests undertaken on the island, around the American base in Souda[90] which pollutes the area with radioactivity, and that it is safer for her to buy food in Athens rather than Crete. So, while Argiro was talking about the healthy chickens of Crete, she stopped and added:

> Well, to be honest, my son... I told him, let's buy some meat from here [Crete] which is better than from the butcher's in Athens. No, he says. It's better to buy from the butcher in Athens. Over the last few years there is an American base in Souda, and radioactivity has leaked and spread to the atmosphere. He knows, he's in research at the university. Now I've stopped buying from Crete. And in Crete now it's no good. My mother still sends, however. But for me now it's the same. It's not like once when I used to say, I'll go to the village, I'll buy some lamb, goat, rabbit to have in the freezer. Now my son makes me look at everything the same. Whenever I go, I bring cheese. But either from here or from there, wherever I buy it, it's the same. Now, everywhere, it is adulterated, here and in Crete, everywhere. In the past I knew, I would buy from our cheese dairy, and it would have been clean; now everywhere is the same.

Like Argiro's son, Ioanna in her thirties, daughter of a Cretan immigrant, expressed the belief that in Crete plenty of pesticides and other chemicals are used, to the extent that she can hardly find good products in Crete anymore. Good Cretan products, she said, are exported to Athens and in Crete they sell lower quality. Farmers use pesticides without any state control, and many of them suffer from cancer:

> We know very well that our generation will die from pesticides. Because now they use pesticides that were not used before. We don't know their effect on humans. And from what we know, especially in Crete, all farmers face health problems because they use them in farming... I have heard of many cases. All farmers get one kind of cancer or another from the pesticides they use for their products. I have also heard that they use different products in their homes from the ones they sell.

[90] Souda is an area in Kissamos.

Concerns about the quality of food in Crete were particularly expressed by the second generation of immigrants, by young people who were brought up in the city. Argiro's son disapproved of red meat consumption more than twice a week, urged her to eat fish and white meat instead, and discouraged his daughter from eating the cakes her grand-mother prepared for her. Argiro commented on that by saying 'her dad told her not to eat, so that she doesn't become fat like her grandmother!'

There is an interesting parallel in the way Argiro experiences her own relationship with the village and her son's relationship with Greece. While her granddaughter was preparing for her return to the States, Argiro was contemplating what kind of food to send to her son. At the same time, she associated her son in the US with food control, both in terms of quality and quantity, the same pressure for food control that Argiro experiences when she is in Crete and thinks of Athens. When she goes to the village she feels that she can not abstain from food and she ends up putting on weight. Food control becomes an issue only when she thinks about her return to Athens:

> How can I not put on weight? In the morning we drink our coffee with *koulourákia*[91]. At eleven my mother will say 'shall we have a snack?' My answer is always no, let's not eat any more. But, then, she will cut tomatoes from the garden, cucumber, little olives, cheese - she used to do cheese at home and preserve it in oil but now she's too old. She will put everything on the plate with a little bit of oil and garlic. And then we will take hand-kneaded *paksimádhia* (rusks), those made in the village, and dip them in the oil. Last time, when I saw myself in the mirror, I wondered how I could return to Athens in such terrible shape (*s'aftá ta khália*).

The idea that food intake has to be counted and controlled is something that in Argiro's worldview stands in opposition to the sense of food abundance associated with Crete. In an earlier quote, she refers to the house in the village as a house 'full of cheeses, butter, everything'. All my informants without a single exception used the language of food abundance and plenitude in their references to Crete, especially when they referred to the past. The experience of food in abundance was what they found people in the city lacked. For example, this is how Nikos and Nelly informed me about the tomatoes they receive from the village:

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[91] A type of cookie.

> Nikos: If you could see what is going on here in the winter! Every day they send 4-5 crates full of tomatoes from Crete. Whatever the human brain can think of. They send to Lachanagora[92] 50,000 tomatoes, and we end up delivering them to our friends.
> Nelly: If you could see the quantities of food that they send from 'down there' (*apó káto*), you'll say that these will last us for two years!

Among Cretan immigrants, references to cheeses were made in blocks (*kefália*) of 10-15 kilos each, while references to olive oil were made by tins (*tenekés*), each tin containing a minimum 15 kilos of oil. Counting and controlling the availability and consumption of food is often an experience associated with commercialisation and monetary transactions. As Weiss (1996) reports from his research among the Haya communities in Northwest Tanzania, the way the Haya experienced the difference between food that was purposed for consumption among family and friends and food that was produced to be sold in the market was through the concept of counting and quantification. Food in the Haya world was regarded as their 'wealth' and played a significant role in how they conceptualised their relationship to the outside world:

> What do you think of the life here? You see that we are not wealthy. We don't have things. But, we don't have any trouble with food. Food we do have. Food is our wealth (ibid.:127).

A similar observation about counting and controlling food is reported by Sutton (1994) from his experience on the Greek island of Kalymnos. One way that Kalymnians perceive their difference from the Koans (the inhabitants of a neighbouring island who are regarded as having lost their traditional values due to tourism and as being only interested in money) is that they like to buy things in bulk, whereas the Koans are more calculating and buy only as much as they need. The same observation applied also to the tourists on the island who would ask for one apple and two bananas and would end up getting them for free, as the Kalymnian vendor was too embarrassed to charge for them (ibid.:248)[93] [94].

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[92] Lakhanaghorá is a place between Athens and Pireus where wholesale trading of fruit and vegetables takes place; it is the place where food producers from the country deliver the foods to the local traders.
[93] Cf. Herzfeld (1991 ch.5) on the negative relation between counting and the fluidity of social relations.

Nelly's comment that food provisions from the village seem like they are going to last for two years exemplifies a significant point in the way food quantity and collective identity are linked. When the food from the village arrives in bulk in the urban household, it is stored and managed in such a way that it can last for a long period of time and be used in formal and informal social gatherings among friends who can appreciate it, i.e. who are Cretans or who like Cretan food. Douglas (1991) argues that the act of storing becomes the vehicle through which the future is structured and planned on the basis of memory, and the experience of space in the home changes for the sake of this plan. The food from the village, mostly planned to be consumed among Cretans friends, becomes important in the experience of the urban house.

Argiro was saving the snails her mother had sent from Crete to cook for some doctors, friends of the family, 'from Crete of course, who knew about the dish.' She was proud of the way she could cook snails (*khokhliούs*), with potatoes, onions, tomatoes, and courgettes, like her mother in the village. Their friends told her that they would come to taste her nice *khokhliούs*, and they did not mind if she did not prepare anything else.

But probably the most characteristic example of how food from Crete is used in the city to reinforce a sense of belonging (as in 'those who know about the dish') is the case of Cretan *piláfi*. The Cretan *piláfi* (rice cooked in the juice of meat with the addition of a special kind of butter) is the most renowned dish of Crete. I heard many stories about *piláfi*, and almost all were related to inviting friends and cooking the dish at their request. *Piláfi* is also the dish that Cretans cook on festive occasions, the dish that objectifies more than any other food the sense of community.

Nikos liked to tell stories about how the Athenians consider rice to be a second-rate dish because they do not know how good Cretan *piláfi* tastes:

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[94] In my research in London, one thing that the Greek students found strange and attributed to the high degree of commercialisation in England was the fact that the fruit in the supermarket was labelled separately.

> Listen to what happened to me once. I have a friend, from Crete, he is a doctor. We invited him over at Christmas. He told me, I'll come but on one condition: you will cook Cretan *piláfi*. When we all sat at the table and I saw two couples sniggering (*khaskoghelághane*) at the sight of the *piláfi*, I turned to them and said: shall I tell you what you are saying? That he made rice because he has the runs (*ékhei kópsimo*). But this is Cretan *piláfi*, as doctor Chatzidhakis requested. They started to eat... I had boiled lots of goat's meat and village chicken, 15 kilos of meat. The meat was indeed full of fat, and if you put a lot of meat the *piláfi* turns out very tasty. From that day, they keep asking me to cook some *piláfi* for them.

A few months before I met them, Nikos and Nelly married their daughter. The wedding took place in Athens and it was celebrated in a restaurant. Because Nikos could not invite 'his own people' without offering them Cretan *piláfi*, as they always do at weddings in Crete, he cooked the rice himself. And because the *piláfi* has to be served immediately after cooking, he ended up cooking *piláfi* for the guests until midnight (*épsina piláfia mékhri ta mesánikhta*), 22 kilos of rice.

Either in the formal ritualistic context of the wedding, or in less formal gatherings among Cretans, or even at the level of everyday consumption within the family, food from *tópos* structures the experience of the city in multiple ways. It structures the experience of time, of space; it provides a sense of security; as Argiro said, in the past she knew that there was always food from Crete in the house which made her feel secure. The main difference between Nikos and other Cretan informants, such as Argiro, was the fact that as a travel agent specialising in Crete, Nikos had the opportunity to travel very frequently to the island to get food provisions, as well as arrange for provisions to be transported to Athens. Most of my informants did not have that chance, and had to buy food in Athens when they ran out of provisions. This was an important dimension in their sense of change, in which the parents in the village played an important role. When the parents were still young, food arrived in the urban household all year round. Food, being both an expression of care and control by the village family[95], was provided to the migrant in abundance. The food in the village was mainly home grown and produced within the

[95] Food is a domain where the relationship between parents (especially the mother) and children is negotiated. Feeding involves relations of dependency and power. The verb 'to eat' (*trógho*) has multiple uses in the Greek language, all of which revolve around the notion of power/strength (*dhínami*) (Potamianou and Carapanos 1984:55); a power/strength that is offered, seized, held back, shared, lost.

household- a practice that gradually stopped with the lapse of time. Nikos recalls that when his father was alive, he was very insistent in making sure that his son had not run out of provisions:

> When my father was still alive, he only had to hear it once in a conversation that we had run out of honey, and he would send us more. We didn't have to ask him. And he would do the same for wine and olive oil. He would think, maybe they don't have enough, let me send some to be sure. He drove my wife crazy once: are you sure you have enough honey and you are not buying it?

Among dairy products, the one that embodies more clearly than any other the social relation between the village and the city is cheese. Crete is known for its cheeses, especially for the Cretan graviera, which are made from sheep and goat milk. There is a tradition in cheese production in Crete, and many cheeses were made at a household level. Argiro's mother used to make cheese and send it to her daughter; there were always 2-3 blocks of cheese in the Argiro's house all year round. Graviera would be kept in the fridge and mizithra in the freezer. In this way the urban family knew that there was always good cheese from Crete in the fridge. Now they have to bring the cheese themselves from Crete and when they run out they have to buy from Cretan shops or from the supermarket.

Ilias and Eleni, now in their late fifties, come from two neighbouring villages in Kissamos. They met and got married in Crete and moved to Athens in 1968. I first met Ilias and Eleni at the celebration of Klídhonas, a divining ceremony (cf. Stewart 1991:130) that takes place in June and which is celebrated through the exchange of *mandináthes*[96], Cretan food and folk dancing. Ilias was the most jovial and active participant. As Eleni explained 'Ilias never sits down. He is a member of 6-7 Cretan associations and participates in almost all the organised events'. Since the beginning of the year, the couple with their two daughters had already attended 28 events organised by Cretan associations in Athens. Referring to their daughters, both in their middle twenties, Eleni said that they have a special bond with Crete:

[96] Folk Cretan couplets

> My children are influenced by the music and the language of the place (*tou tópou*). When they go to Crete, they speak the local idiom. When you ask them where they come from, they say we come from Crete.

A variety of Cretan products enter the household every year, carried back by the family after each visit to Crete, normally once a year, among them, graviera Kritis, mizithra, anthotiro[97] and ksinomizithra (sour mizithra):

> Eleni: We go to Crete every summer. We don't usually go at Christmas and Easter. My husband goes more often. We always bring back with us products from Crete, though there are many shops here which sell Cretan products. We bring meat, olive oil, wine, the best wine is from Kissamos, very nice fragrance, and we produce it ourselves. I bring graviera Krítis, mizithres. If I go at Easter, I also bring anthotiro. I get 15 kilos of graviera, and a kilo of anthotiros. Anthotiros doesn't last long, it has to be eaten immediately. In the summer I bring a type of mizithra, called ksinomizithra, which is produced only in Crete. I keep it in the freezer for a year.

Among my Cretan informants, Eleni was the least worried about finding good quality food in the city. She believed that she could find good food to buy in Athens as long as she was a good customer and received preferential treatment. She liked to visit the supermarket and try different varieties of cheese at the cheese counter, including Cretan graviera -it goes without saying that she had developed a good relationship with the cheese assistant.

Eleni does not mind substituting food brought from Crete with food purchased in Athens, if that proves to be more practical. For example, when she invites Cretan friends for a meal she will prepare Cretan *piláfi*, 'like they always do in Cretan homes', with the only exception that instead of the glazed rice that is used for Cretan *piláfi*, she buys Barba Ben (Uncle Ben) which does not turn soggy and can be used for other dishes:

> Sorry that I use the American Barba Ben, but I can also use this rice in *ghemistá*[98] without worrying that it will turn soggy (*na laspósei*). Cretan *piláfi* should be served after all have sat at the table. Ten minutes and it turns soggy. If I use Barba Ben, I can still eat it the next day.

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[97] *Anthótiros* is a fresh soft white cheese. Mizithra in Crete is a hard salty cheese.
[98] Vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, zucchini) stuffed with rice and minced meat.

In the spirit of consuming Cretan food but purchasing it in the city (as in many cases the food brought from the village is not sufficient), Eleni tries out products that she finds in the supermarket. Once, she tried FAGE's packaged GRAVIERA KRITIS but she found it a bit tasteless. What is more, she commented on the quantity contained in the package:

> We have tried FAGE's packaged graviera. It's small cheeses *(eínai mikrá tirákia)*! In Crete, we are used to 12 kilos at least.

For thousands of rural immigrants who used to receive blocks of cheese, 15 kilos each, from the village, the transition to a more commercialised food production is experienced not only in terms of quality (the cheese is tasteless, or it has a mild taste) but also in terms of quantity. Dairy manufacturers might do their best to produce good graviera, as close as possible to the 'authentic' (as the TV advertisement claims), but the idea of buying the cheese in 250 gr packaging conveys the feeling that the cheese is 'counted', individually packaged, and not representative of the collective experience that the food of *tópos* evokes. It is no coincidence that dairy manufacturers interested in increasing their market share in cheese had to expand their efforts from packaged cheese to bulk selling at the cheese counter (see chap. 3, part 3).

4.2 *PART TWO*

Modernity and Nationhood in Butter versus Olive Oil

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the nutritional value and beneficial properties of the Mediterranean diet. Crete has emerged as the paradise of healthy eating, and olive oil has taken central position as one of its most basic elements. Caught in structural opposition within this health discourse, butter has suffered a heavy blow and its already low consumption has fallen even further. In this section, I will argue that in Greece lack of interest in butter by the dairy industry, intense advertising by the margarine producers, and the emergence of the Mediterranean Diet nutrition regime, resulted in the development of an unusual structural relationship: in most countries butter and margarine stand in structural opposition, representing the two basic myths of the modern food system (the natural and the artificial); in Greece, the food that best represents the country's history, nature and tradition (and economic interest) is olive oil, while butter (which is not clearly distinguished from margarine) stands for the foreign polluting element.

4.2.1. Butter versus margarine

Since its invention in the late nineteenth century margarine has gone through a long process of prohibition in many parts of the world, the severest of which took place in the US and Canada (Ball and Lilly 1982). The problem with margarine throughout its history was that from the moment of its inception its purpose was to become a cheap replacement for butter. The centre of the controversy between butter and margarine was that the latter was being defined, even by legislation, in terms of what it was not- as 'anything that resembles butter but was not butter' (ibid.:492). In a country like Canada where most of the milk produced was used for the production of butter (Heick 1991:141), the product easily became associated with romantic imagery of nature and bucolic life. It became linked to the agrarian myth (Pabst 1937), a national symbol of peace and welfare, a central part of tradition and folklore (Visser 1986:105).

Margarine manufacturers, trying to imitate not only the taste, smell, appearance and texture of butter but also its nostalgic rural imagery, chose brand names that

suggested nostalgia, the regal, the childlike or the natural (ibid.:106). The choice of such brand names indicates how margarine was trying to escape from being the sign of artificiality, the 'stigmatised impostor carrying moral danger' (ibid.). The artificiality of margarine is grounded on the fact that it makes no difference which fat is used for its production, 'for all individual properties of the raw materials are automatically removed in the processing' (ibid.:104). Margarine oils are interchangeable; they are processed and neutralised of everything that is reminiscent of their origin. Then, taste, smell, colour, vitamins, everything is added to make margarine look and feel like butter. Whereas 'a cow is incapable of changing its ways to conform to fashion ... margarine ... is versatility itself' (ibid.:110).

In the US, the dairy industry insisted that margarine should be prevented by every means from resembling butter. The main controversy and cause of restrictions related to the imitation of butter's 'golden colour', which proved to be a powerful factor in attracting consumers. This was why white margarine was taxed less than yellow margarine. "Five of the states went so far as to have all margarine dyed pink, presumably so that no one could take it seriously..." (ibid.:107). There is an element of irony surrounding the issue of colour and its link to nature versus artificiality. The tax on yellow margarine, which was initially imposed on the ground that margarine was artificially coloured, continued to exist even when natural yellow oils were used for its manufacturing. In contrast, in times when butter had a pale colour due to environmental conditions, colouring agents were used in butter to ensure a nice 'golden' colour.

Margarine carried powerful symbolic connotations as it became entangled in the transition from agricultural to industrial order (Ball and Lilly 1982:488). Aid to butter was considered as aid to agriculture and the national economy, despite the fact that the two industries -butter and margarine- produced a similar product using similar equipment (Pabst 1937). According to Visser, the desperation with which butter producers fought the margarine industry should be seen as

> an index of the anxiety we experience as we watch ways of life we have loved being killed off, apparently inexorably. The struggle was -and is- theatrically symbolic. It represents the great oppositions articulated in our culture: the land versus the city, the farm ... versus the factory, independent versus corporately-

> controlled business, tradition versus not-necessarily-preferable novelty, nature versus human manipulation, labour-intensive versus machine-operated industry, uniqueness versus interchangeability (ibid.:112-113).

While the agrarian myth was being promoted by the dairy industry based on advertising slogans such as 'butter can be made purely and simply. Imitations can't' (Heick 1991:156), high cholesterol concerns became the weapon of the margarine industry. From the 1960s onwards, margarine advertising adopted health slogans implicitly portraying butter as a health danger. By becoming a representative of a healthy, light lifestyle, margarine gradually acquired an independent status, and instead of margarine imitating butter, butter began to imitate margarine (Pantzar 1995). Margarine advertising extensively used the technical vocabulary of nutrition and terms such as saturated and unsaturated fats entered into everyday use.

4.2.2 Butter and margarine in Greece

> Wherever 'gourmet' food remains or becomes the ideal, butter eclipses margarine with ease. (Visser 1986:111-112)

There was certainly something special about butter in the way it was referred to and used by a variety of people in Athens. References to butter were rare and limited only to specific contexts such as festive occasions and traditional dishes (for example, when I asked an informant what it was that she associated butter with she answered *kourabiédhes*[99]). Among Cretan immigrants, clarified cooking butter (*stakovoútiro*) was among the foods that was specially brought from the village and kept mainly for the preparation of Cretan *piláfi*, which is the most festive dish in Cretan cuisine.

However, the word 'butter' was very often used and frequently referred to as a fat used in the kitchen. The reason is that the Greeks say 'butter' when they usually mean margarine. Since the word 'butter' is interchangeably used to refer to both butter and margarine, when there is need to distinguish the former from the latter certain epithets are added in front of the word such as 'pure' (*aghnó*), 'good' (*kaló*), 'true' and 'real' (*alithinó, praghmatikó*) or 'animal' (*zoikó*). Another epithet added in

[99] *Kourabiés* is a Christmas sweet made from flour and butter and coated in caster sugar.

front of the word butter is 'fresh' (*frésko voútiro*), but this is normally used to distinguish cooking fat from table fat.

The relation between butter and margarine in Greece was not marked with the same controversy as in other, butter-producing, countries. The first margarine was introduced in Athens after the War by the Greek company ELAIS through the hydrogenation of olive oil. In 1948, ELAIS advertised two margarine products, PHYTINI and VITAM (Fig. 4.1). PHYTINI was advertised as a full replacement of 'pure cooking butter' (*aghnó voútiro magheirikís*) at half its price. Within another context, the use of the word 'pure' as an epithet for butter in the margarine advertisement would appear a strange thing to do. In a culture where pure connotes natural, and where the aim is to down-play margarine's 'artificial' connotations, the word pure in association with butter would never have been used in a margarine advertisement. In Greece, however, it was more important to ensure that PHYTINI was perceived as a replacement for real cooking butter, i.e. not any other kind of cooking fat. Within a context where 'butter' denotes many kinds of fat, the purpose of the word 'pure' was to indicate that PHYTINI was an equally nutritious and at the same time cheaper replacement of real butter. PHYTINI gradually became a generic word denoting cooking fat and it was referred to as such in recipe books.

In the advertisement for VITAM in 1948, the company chose not to mention the word margarine at all. The advert promoted 'VITAM instead of fresh butter' at a third of its price. Again, the addition of the word 'fresh' in association to butter in a margarine advertisement serves the purpose of explaining that VITAM replaces table butter as opposed to cooking butter. As before, the need for this clarification was because 'butter' was a term used for different kinds of fat.

Margarine in Greece was intensively advertised (especially after foreign multinationals penetrated the Greek market[100]). Butter advertisements, on the other hand, did not often appear. There was locally produced butter (by companies such as EVGA, FAGE, Vassilika Ktimata Tatoiou, and also the white butter from sheep milk, which became known as 'Kerkyras type' butter) but it was not promoted as

[100] ELAIS merged with UNILEVER in 1976

Figure 4.1 ELAIS Advertisements

systematically as was margarine. The worldwide surplus of butter (Grant 1991) including the butter 'mountain' in the EC[101], created a rather negative environment for further investment in butter production in a country where milk production was comparatively low. Today, butter in Greece is produced by only a few companies such as DODONI and EPIRUS from ewe's as well as cow's milk, but not by the big dairy manufacturers.

In a country with low milk quotas imposed by the EU, the big dairy manufacturers did not show much interest in butter. Butter was easily replaced by margarine, phytin and other vegetable fats. What is more, the term 'butter' was used to apply to everything that looked like butter. However, one type of fat that 'butter' never denoted was olive oil, nor anything that looked like it. The reason was that butter and olive oil represented two different culinary traditions (one from the north and one from the south of Greece), which came into contact in the Greek capital and formed a base upon which social identities were negotiated.

4.2.3 'Butter' and olive oil: two worlds on a plate

One day in 1997, in my parents' house in Athens, a plate of green beans (*fasolákia*) became the focus of a culinary disagreement. It concerned the quantity of 'butter'[102] it contained which, my father found, was not sufficient. 'This dish is tasteless', he remarked and urged my mother to use more 'butter' in her cooking. My mother, on the other hand, had developed a strategy of replacing some of the 'butter' with oil so that her cooking became 'lighter'. Convinced that it was thanks to her inventive strategies of 'light' cooking that my father was still alive, she dismissed his complaints with the remark 'What can you expect from an *Anatolíti*[103]?'

The plate of green beans that my mother cooked using a mixture of 'butter' and oil summarises the development in time and space of culinary traditions in Greece. As is also the case in other Mediterranean countries, butter is produced in the north where cattle herding prevails, while olive oil is a product of the south. In France, for

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[101] In the 1980s, butter reserves in the EC reached 1.3 million tons (Trofima kai Pota, July-August 1986:31).

[102] My mother always uses PHYTINI in her cooking and always refers to it as 'butter'.

[103] *Anatolítis* is a man with origins in Anatolia (lit. East) who is, therefore, used to 'heavy' cuisine. (For the cultural significance of the terms 'heavy' and 'light' see Chap.4, Part 4).

example, butter is associated with the prestige and power of the north and has become the foundation of French cuisine and a symbol of delicacy and finesse; the cooking in southern France, on the contrary, which is based more on olive oil 'tends to be called "hearty" or "robust", and other rustic epithets' (Visser 1986:99).

In Greece, butter and olive oil acquired opposing symbolic connotations similar to France. Zouraris (1998) mentions two cuisines that developed in the eastern and western side of the Aegean sea in the 19th century. The eastern (and northern) side, which incorporated the rich trading centres of the Ottoman Empire (Istanbul, Salonica, Izmir), had an elaborate and rich cuisine based on butter, which found its utmost expression in Poli[104] (*Polítiki* cuisine). On the south-western side of the Aegean, where the Greek War of Independence broke out in the early 19th century, another culinary tradition developed that was based less on imported luxurious commodities and more on locally produced food. This culinary tradition was based on olive oil, which abounds in the arid landscape of southern Greece.

My father was born in Izmir (Smirni). In the so-called Great Catastrophe in 1922, in a massive exchange of populations between Turks and Greeks, a quarter of a million people fled Asia Minor and came as refugees to the independent Greek state. My father came to Athens where in 1960 he married my mother, a 'real' Athenian (*véra Athinéa*) as she proudly asserts, born and raised in the capital. Despite the 40 years that have elapsed since, for her he still has the habits and tastes of an 'Anatolitis', who prefers the 'heavy' north-eastern cuisine with plenty of butter and sugar. As far as she is concerned, green beans should be cooked in olive-oil; they belong, after all, like many other vegetable dishes, to the culinary category of *'ladherá'* (lit. cooked in oil).

As I soon came to realise, in many of the families that I visited during fieldwork, the choice of cooking fat ('butter' or oil) was a central issue in everyday family politics. An illustrative example was Nikos and Nelly. Nikos was brought up in a village in Crete whereas Neli's parents, like my father, were born in Smirni and came to Athens as refugees in 1922.

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[104] The Greek name for Istanbul is Constantinoupoli, often referred to as Poli (lit. city).

Nikos kept a strong bond with his family in the village and had imposed in the house the Cretan way of cooking. Neli said in discontent that Nikos and the children did not like her mother's recipes from Izmir, and that she had stopped cooking them. She referred to the way of cooking of her sister-in-law from Crete. As a main difference she identified the use of olive oil instead of butter:

> My sister-in-law puts olive oil in everything, everything I tell you. I can't stand it. In Crete, women use oil even in cakes. Oh, I would die before I do that. My mother wouldn't have even *ladherá* in oil. She always likes to use butter, butter and tomato in her cooking. Fried eggs in tomato sauce. With butter and sugar.

Like Neli, who was trying to comply with the Cretan way of cooking and use olive oil instead of butter, Nana who was married to a Cretan but had spent almost half of her life in northern Greece, remembers disagreeing with her husband when they were newly married because of the quantity of oil he wanted in his food:

> In Crete they eat a lot and the food is very oily. The food 'swims in oil' [*kolimbá sto ládhi*]. When we were newly married, I remember my husband saying that there was not enough oil in the food. He said that he was coming from an area which produces oil and he wanted oil in his food. So, I kept pouring and pouring oil. I asked him: 'How much oil do you think is enough?'

Nana, in her seventies, spent her childhood in Kastoria, a town in northern Greece, and later in Thessaloniki. After the Second World War, her family moved to Athens where Nana was married to a Cretan immigrant who was a medical doctor. They had two daughters, Elsa and Marina. Today, they all live in a three storey house in Glyfada, a southern upmarket suburb of Athens; the parents occupy the top floor and the daughters with their families the first and the second. In the groundfloor lives the grandmother, Nana's mother.

In order to please her husband, Nana adjusted her northern Greek way of cooking to that of Crete; something that caused criticism from her mother, who liked to sauté everything in butter:

> Nana: I think I learned how to cook in my [parental] house. Because I have known how to cook since I was a kid. I didn't learn how to cook Cretan. The only thing I did was to adapt what I already knew to what my husband knew. Because this is what he liked and

this is what I continued. A thing for which I receive a lot of criticism from my mother. She doesn't like oil and uses butter for sautéing. I boil everything together, you know, the oil with the vegetables and everything else, together.

Elsa: Our grandma likes butter. She sticks butter everywhere, so that 'it smells' (*ya na mirísi*). When we were kids, she prepared for us fried potatoes, and she fried them in oil, and then she put butter on top to brown them (*ya na rodhísoun*).

Nana found similarities between the Turkish and the northern Greek cuisine which she juxtaposed with Cretan food. The latter she referred to as less complicated:

> I remember in Thessaloniki they used to make these sweets from milk crust, a heavy stuff but delicious, Turkish sweet. They collect the crust from the milk and they put one on top of the other until it becomes something thick, which they cut like baklava... In Crete, food is very simple. They don't have complicated things.

Despina, also in her seventies, was born and brought up in central Athens in the area of Neapoli. She was married to Ilias, whose origins were from Mani, an area in the south of the Peloponnese known for its good olive oil. Ilias had property in Mani, olive trees. As soon as they were married, Ilias made clear that he would not have butter in his house. As Despina recalls:

Despina: The only thing that we used in our house was olive oil. Ilias used to tell me that if I wanted fried eggs in the house, no butter. You will make them, he said, with oil... The eggs with oil!

Petridou: Did you fry eggs in butter in your parents' house?

Despina: Yes. That's why we pay now for the cholesterol.

Petridou: But surely there was olive oil in Athens...

Despina: Well, yes. But my mother used to say that you can't eat *dolmádhes*[105] in oil. They need butter. And indeed they do. There are certain dishes that need butter. In mash potatoes you have to use a little bit of butter because of the milk. You can't put oil where there is milk.

The choice between 'butter' and oil, trivial as it may seem, constituted in the everyday life of many Athenians a source of dispute, criticism, negotiation and compromise. The negotiation and decisions involved not only relate to tradition and taste; they are also linked to understandings of health and well-being. Cultural understandings about the 'heaviness' and 'lightness' of food inform food choice, as do other lay classifications such as 'fatty' food. I will explore such beliefs about food,

[105] Vine leaves stuffed with rice and minced meat.

health and the body in the last section of this chapter. Here, I will focus on a nutritional model that has not only had a strong impact in Greece in the last two decades and has associated olive oil with health, but has also become part of a discourse on identity, regional as well as national.

Studies in the Mediterranean region based on mortality statistics between the period 1960-1990 have concluded that adherence to the principles of the traditional Mediterranean diet is associated with longevity (Trichopoulou and Vasilopoulou 2000; see also Willett et all 1995; Trichopoulou and Lagiou 1997). As the authors contend, the traditional Mediterranean diet mainly corresponds to the eating habits of the rural population of southern Italy and Crete in the 1960s. The Mediterranean diet, usually depicted in the form of a pyramid, is dominated by the consumption of olive oil, the high consumption of vegetables, fruit and cereals, and the low consumption of red meat (Figure 4.2).

Between 1996 and 1997, one out of two newspaper articles that I collected on dairy products referred to the Mediterranean diet. Quite often, there was an element of national pride in the way the Greek dietary habits (those that are supposed to be Greek dietary habits according to the Mediterranean diet) are juxtaposed to the 'western diet'. At the same time, however, this pride is overshadowed by the realisation that Greek dietary habits have also changed over the last few decades, adopting western models:

> Greece is good for health. The western way of life, which is different from traditional Greek dietary habits, led to an increase in heart disease... Over the last 30 years, traditional diet and physical activity have been replaced by western dietary habits and sedentary life. Obesity, high cholesterol and diabetes are particularly common in touristic areas. (Ependitis, 25/8/96)

As a newspaper article explicitly phrased it, now that in the West they have turned towards healthy Greek food, Greeks do exactly the opposite by insisting on imitating what people in the West did twenty years ago:

Figure 4.2 The Mediterranean Diet

> We used to have a much healthier diet in the past. The Mediterranean model of diet prevailed, especially in rural areas. This model had beneficial effects on the health of the Greeks, and even today we have a high percentage of longevity. In the last 20 years, however, we have started to abandon this model, and we have adopted the dietary model western developed countries had 20 years ago. Now, western countries have realised the bad consequences, and have turned towards healthy food; we, however, are moving exactly the opposite direction. (Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia, 25/8/96)

At the centre of the Mediterranean diet discourse is the low consumption of red meat, which is one of the main areas where there is a discrepancy between what the Greek dietary habits should be and what they really are. After World War II, meat emerged in Greece as a symbol of prestige and modernisation. As Sutton found on the island of Kalymnos, there was an association of meat 'with the younger generation, and with "modernization", while vegetarianism was seen as part of the "old years"' (1997b:7). Although Sutton attributes the negative predisposition towards meat to the fishing tradition of the island, as juxtaposed against the pastoralist values of the mountainous Cretan population where in the 1980s meat was highly-esteemed and functioned as a symbol of status and manhood (Herzfeld 1985), he acknowledges that, at least in the mid 1990s, meat was 'a banner of the ambivalent legacy of "modernization" on the island' (1997b:7).

In Crete, there has been a strong association of meat with modernisation. Argiro's husband, Charalambos, migrated to Athens in the early 1960s. Probably influenced by the scientific evidence about the bad effects of high consumption of red meat, he criticised the way the people on the island have changed since the time he left, despising vegetables, and replacing their vegetable diet with increased consumption of meat:

> In my village, meat was eaten only at Christmas and Easter. It wasn't eaten three times a week like now. They used to eat beans, peas, vegetables, in the summer zucchini with potatoes in the pot - the healthiest food! Now they despise vegetables and they eat meat and fish day and night.... Newly-rich people, who became rich from the greenhouses; they drilled and found water and became rich. They go to the coffee-houses and boast who has eaten more meat. Pulses? They don't touch them; we used to eat them during the German occupation, they say. In the past, they were workers, they begged for work. Now, you can't find a worker in the village. Now they have all become rich. Those days, they used to fast. And now? Vegetables are eaten by rabbits, they say. The best food is the

> steak. It stops the brrr[106]..., they say. And they end up in hospital with uric acid.

It is the Cretan diet that has been mainly promoted as the model on which the Mediterranean diet is based. Cretans have the reputation of greater longevity than the rest of the Greeks. Some Cretans believe that the research for the Mediterranean diet was carried out on their island, but, as they argue, it is the Italians and the Spanish who have benefited most from the promotion of the 'Mediterranean' concept. At the same time, questions have been raised about the extent to which the country and the local food manufacturers have taken advantage of the increased interest in Mediterranean diet to successfully market their products abroad.

In the case of the Mediterranean diet, the Greek classical heritage and the dietary habits of the ancestors are evoked once more. Supporters of olive oil have resorted to ancient sources to find justification for the product's beneficial qualities as opposed to the detrimental (for the health of modern Greeks) adoption of foreign butter[107]. They argue that the very name that the ancient Greeks gave to butter indicates that it was not considered part of their own civilisation. The word *voútiro* (butter) originates from the ancient Greek words *vou-tiron* (cow-cheese). The reference to cattle denoted the geographical (and cultural) distance of the Greek from their northern neighbours. Cattle farming prevailed in the north and was opposed to the herding of sheep and goats in the south. A Greek poem satirising the Thracians[108] in the fourth century BC describes them as "butterophagous gentry" with unkempt hair....(*voutirofághoi*) (Dalby 2000:112; Visser 1986:90). The ancient Greeks made fun of their northern neighbours not only because they consumed a lot of milk but also because they ate butter. Because in hot weather butter melts and can not be preserved, they preserved milk by turning it to cheese. They used butter only as a body ointment and considered those who had it for breakfast 'barbarians' (Greek Gastronomy 1999:267).

In an effort to save margarine from its association with butter, manufacturers stopped promoting it as a replacement for butter and emphasised instead that the

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[106] Diarrhoea
[107] Butter entered the Greek diet through the Ottomans (Greek Gastronomy 1999:267)
[108] A people living on the northern coast of the Aegean sea.

fat it is made from in Greece derives from olive oil. The Mediterranean diet discourse had a double impact with regard to butter. Not only did it provide scientific proof that in nutritional terms butter was inferior to olive oil, but it also evoked symbolic associations according to which olive oil became the national fat since ancient times. Depicted on the western pediment of the Parthenon is the ancient myth of goddess Athina offering as present to the Athenians the olive tree. Blessed even by the Olympian gods, olive oil, like feta, stands as the material objectification of the nation, an embodiment of its history, landscape, purity and health. It is against this powerful symbolism that butter acquires its meaning as the source of all evil.

4.3 PART THREE

Cheese as Tópos

In his book on Greek cheese (*Ellinikó Tirí*), Ilias Mamalakis[109] writes:

> For us, cheese is not a food complement. It is food. If you search into the habits of other Europeans, you will find that the custom is to eat cheese after the meal. In France, for example, it constitutes the first plate of the dessert. You will never see a Frenchman eating camembert with his fillet. I remember some dear French friends at breakfast, how it made their hair curl watching me apply a substantial quantity of chèvre cheese to my warm butter croissant. In Italy, on the other hand, there are cases where cheese is served as a starter. [...] But in the main meal you will not easily find cheese as a food accompaniment. And as far as pizza is concerned, let me tell you that the authentic Neapolitan or Sicilian pizzas do not contain cheese [....] In England, there is no talk about it, since [cheese] rarely appears on the table... In Greece, on the contrary, people like cheese and consume it at any hour of the day, from morning till late at night... (1999:25-26).

The role of cheese in Greek dietary habits has often been described as 'the joker' (o *baladér*)[110] due to its ubiquitous presence in combination with a wide variety of dishes. More than any other Greek cheese, the characterisation 'joker' refers to feta, which represents more than 40% of total cheese consumption in Greece (ibid.:16). In northern Greece, in particular, no distinction is made between feta and cheese. When northern Greeks refer to cheese, they mean feta. As a friend from Naousa, a town in West Macedonia, explained:

> From the cheeses, we mainly eat feta. We don't call it feta, we call it cheese. We always have it on the table and we eat it like a fruit. First we put feta on the table and then everything else.

Feta is often paralleled to fruit, in the sense that it feels 'light' and fresh and can be consumed at any time of the day on its own or combined. What is considered to be a very 'light' meal, ideal for a late dinner[111] in the summer, is a combination of feta

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[109] I. Mamalakis is a journalist and writer with expertise on Greek cheeses.

[110] For example a recipe book on cheeses was entitled 'Cheese... a "joker" on the table' (TA NEA, Magheiriki 2000).

[111] The main meal in Greek culture is lunch, normally between two and four o'clock. Dinner is around nine o'clock in the evening and it is recommended that it should be as 'light' as possible.

with melon or other summer fruit such as grapes. Despite being recorded as a cheese with a spicy and very salty taste (Layton 1971), many Greeks find feta's taste mild, which brings it closer to the category of a staple food rather than the category of delicatessen. A conversation between Elsa (Nana's daughter) and her brother-in-law, Vasilis, illustrates this point. Vasilis, who likes to experiment with wines and cheese, describes feta as a mild cheese; Elsa thinks of feta more as food and less as a cheese to be combined with wines:

> Vasilis: The more piquant (*piperáto*) the cheese, the stronger should be the wine. If you take yellow cheeses, like those from Holland, they go with white wine.
> Petridou: What about Greek cheeses? Kaseri, for example?
> Vasilis: With a white wine, quite easy. You can't drink strong wine with a mild cheese. Feta would go well with white wine.
> Elsa: Or with *kokinéli*[112]. But feta is food, you can't play around with different tastes (*i féta eínai faí, dhen eínai na paízeis me tis yéfseis*).
> Vasilis: Well, it's true that especially in Greece, many people treat feta as a substitute for food. But you can't treat gorgonzola as food!
> Elsa: Yes, because it has a piquant, sharp taste (*piperáti, oksía yéfsi*). You can eat only a bit.

In the culinary habits of Athenians[113], feta seems to be in structural opposition to French cheeses, and as such it is used to express social distinction and the boundary between the formal and the informal (Douglas 1975). French cheeses, popular among the older generations of the middle and upper middle classes, became an integral part of a formal meal and are served at the end. Greek cheeses are associated with less formality, whereas feta alone stands for the informal. Antonis (early thirties), who comes from a middle class family from Piraeus, recalled the way his mother normally serves cheese in his home. Formal meals are accompanied mainly by French cheeses; in less formal invitations, which include *mezédhes*[114], Greek cheeses will be served but not feta. Feta is part of everyday life, an integral part of the everyday meal:

> My mother serves cheese as a separate dish on, say, more formal occasions. Not every day. In formal meals, cheese is always served at the end. But then it depends on what kind of formal meal we are talking about. In a bouffet, there is always cheese. If *mezédhes* are

[112] Red resinated wine
[113] Here, I refer to informants who were born and brought up in Athens.
[114] Small portions of a variety of delicacies, a Greek equivalent of tapas. *Mezédhes* are dishes shared by the diners and denote informality.

> served, cheese would be served along. But never feta. Normally there is graviera Kritis, kefalograviera, kaseri maybe, anthotiros and mizithra. A combination of yellow cheeses with white ones, or hard cheeses with soft. The more formal the meal, the more Greek cheeses are replaced by foreign ones, such as the French, roquefort, brie, a stuffed soft cheese, etc.

Patterns of food consumption change from generation to generation. The younger generation are less characterised by the *xenomania*[115] of their parents and show more interest in Greek cheeses, and Greek tradition in general. A characteristic example of how the generation gap is experienced by younger people is the case of Aleka (30) and her husband Philippos (33). Both born and raised in the capital in well-to-do families, Aleka and Philippos live in Kastri (probably the most expensive and prestigious Athenian suburb). Aleka works in an advertising company and Philippos works in his father's company. They have a wide social circle and often organise food events in the house.

Philippos and Aleka find the serving of cheeses after the meal extremely pretentious- a custom that is not part of Greek culture and which has been adopted by previous generations as an act of imitation of French manners. Referring to the serving of cheese as a separate dish after the meal, Philipos said:

> Philippos: No, we don't do it because it is not part of Greek culture, and I find it very pretentious, and it bothers us a lot. It is not in our culture. In the Greek cuisine, if you serve cheese, you serve it together with the meal. To finish the meal and serve cheeses afterwards is something that has nothing to do with Greek tradition.
>
> Aleka: I believe it has nothing to do with young people. It is the young people who haven't got used to eating cheeses separately. They prefer desserts, etc. But when my mother prepares big meals with guests, they always have cheeses afterwards. And there aren't only yellow cheeses... My mother doesn't serve the normal Brie and the like, but feta and manouri.... Young people are not used to sitting at the table (*se kathistá trapézia*). The new generation, they normally prepare a bouffet...

Following the social conventions of her own generation, Aleka's mother serves the cheeses separately at the end. Unlike Antonis's mother, she also serves Greek cheeses, feta included, but this is commented on by her daughter as not a normal thing to do.

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[115] Attributing increased value to foreign things and lifestyles.

The young couple did not confine their criticism of the older generation to customs related only to cheese. They distanced themselves from the whole system of food and table manners. One day, Aleka prepared for her guests a starter of carrot-soup; when her mother found out, she was shocked and insisted on crepes and salmon:

> Philippos: We are against all pretentious things. To the great disappointment of Aleka's mother... We had prepared lunch for our friends the other day, and we had carrot-soup as a first dish, and then meat in tomato, onions and peppers in the oven, and also home-made apple pie. And then, Aleka's mother called and said, are you crazy, what are you giving them to eat, prepare some crepes and salmon...
> Aleka: She said, are you going to feed them carrot-soup? And of course everybody loved it because they are fed up with these soufflés.
> Philippos: Yes, real food, not fake (*praghmatikó faghitó khorís na eínai pséftiko*). Why give them salmon...? We don't have to prove anything to anybody.

Philippos largely uses the language of pretentiousness. He distinguishes between 'real' and 'fake' food. In this context, 'real' food refers to food which is simple, substantial and nutritious. 'Fake' food, on the other hand, is perceived to be more complicated, expensive and foreign, not a product of the Greek *tópos*.

When he was younger, Philippos used to spend every summer in the Cyclades on the island of Andros. He was a child when his father first visited the island and liked it so much that he decided to buy a house there. As Philippos remembers, in his childhood, if he had to spend half an hour alone in Athens, he became unhappy; in Andros, he could spend 5-6 hours sitting alone on the veranda and did not mind. Philippos felt that his job in Athens did not really fulfil him; he would have liked to live on the island and paint.

In the Cyclades, Philippos discovered some white cheeses that are locally produced at household level; he referred to them as 'cheeses with no name' which he could not find in the city. It is those white, soft, and not very fatty cheeses that he likes most. He distinguishes between 'white' (*áspra*) and 'yellow' (*kítrina*) cheeses, and identified the latter as the 'fatty' category:

Philippos: I like feta but I prefer certain Greek cheeses that I can't normally find. From the Cyclades, local cheeses without a name. In Andros, in Sifnos... All these I like. Mizithra, let's say. At Vasilopoulos we sometimes buy galotiri. I like white cheeses, soft (*malaká*), and not very fatty (*pakhiá*). Even feta I find fatty, you understand? I like cottage cheese very much. Vasilopoulos has anevato. Do you know it? It is sour and light (*elafrí*). I also like the taste of brie but I avoid it because I find it very fatty, also in texture.

Petridou: Well, if you find feta fatty, we have excluded many cheeses...

Philippos: We have excluded all the yellow cheeses. I like their taste but I can feel the fat.

Aleka joined in our conversation and continued when Philippos had to leave. She said,

He likes Greek cheeses but he also likes that yellow one, brie.

It was obvious by her comment that she unconsciously identified Greek cheeses with whiteness and foreign cheeses with yellowness. Later in our conversation, however, she used the attribute 'yellow' to refer to the Greek cheeses graviera and kefalotiri. Her comment, in combination with the way other informants used colour terms to classify cheeses, opened the possibility that there might be more behind the colour attribute than the physical properties of the cheese. It opened the possibility that even something as objective as colour could be subject to interpretation and acquire meaning according to context.

There are cases where folk classifications of cheeses are culturally informed and based on social experience. Stewart (1991:66-67) records that in the Cyclades, on the island of Naxos, kafalotíri and mizithra[116] are respectively called male (*arsenikó*) and female (*thilikó*) cheese. What acquires particular importance in their classification as male and female is the method of production: graviera is the first cheese that is taken out from the cauldron when the milk congeals and sinks to the bottom; this cheese is put under pressure and is then repeatedly salted on both sides. Graviera becomes hard and slightly salty and lasts for a long time. Mizithra, on the other hand, is the second cheese to be produced from the same cauldron, and floats to the

[116] The soft cheese that in Naxos is called mizithra, in Crete is called anthotiros.

top. This cheese becomes softer, lighter and sweeter, does not keep long and has a lower market price.

In the example of Naxos, the meaning of cheese is linked to the cultural construction of gender. Among middle class Athenians, a classification that emerged as significant with regard to cheeses was the colour, which as we shall see was associated with the cultural construction of *tópos*.

White cheeses are believed to have less fat content than yellow cheeses. Yellow cheeses are often called fatty (*pakhiá*). Edam, which is grouped as a yellow cheese, and feta have similar fat content; yet many people I asked thought that feta lower fat content. The yellow colour is mostly associated with fat whereas the white colour has 'healthier' connotations.

The attribute 'yellow' is relational: compared to feta, graviera (which has a pale-yellow colour) could be classified as yellow. Compared to gouda and edam (which are foreign cheeses with a bright-yellow colour), graviera is excluded from the yellow category. Quite often, references to 'yellow' cheeses concern foreign cheeses such as gouda, edam and emmental which are very popular in Greece but which are generally thought to be fattening. Feta, on the other hand, is thought to contain less fat than 'yellow' cheeses and is also identified as a source of calcium intake.

Dina (in her fifties) was brought up in Athens. She lives in an upmarket suburb in Filothei and has a wide social circle. Her husband owns a department store. Their son studies in the US and their daughter attends a private university in Athens. Dina mentioned that the cheeses that she normally buys are feta, emmental and kefalotiri. She explained her choices by saying that these cheeses cover the whole range of needs. Feta, she said, is nutritious. 'Feta is the milk, it's got calcium'. Kefalotiri is the hard, salty cheese that she uses for grating, such as on pasta. Emmental melts and she uses it in cooking; in cheese pie and in sandwiches. This system of classification refers to staple cheeses, i.e. cheeses that are used in everyday cooking. When she has guests, she buys other cheeses, French and Greek, that have more 'complicated' flavours.

In some households, not only those of the middle class, I found that feta had replaced milk. Georgia, for example, who is a house-cleaner and lives with her husband and their two children (13 and 15) in a small house in Ano Liossia, an underdeveloped area in the western outskirts of Athens, said that they don't buy milk anymore because nobody drinks it. 'We get calcium from feta; we eat 2 kilos of feta every week!', she said.

Anna, who is a young single woman of 33, a school-teacher brought up in Athens, summarises in an incisive way everything that feta stands for for her:

> I have always thought of feta as something healthy, maybe because I have associated it with calcium. It is white, it's like drinking milk. When I am on a diet, I don't eat yellow cheese. When I am on diet, I want to eat healthy food. I don't know how they make cheese, but I believe that feta is made by the simplest process, the least elaborate.

Due to its whiteness and high liquid content, feta is attributed a status of healthiness and goodness because of its association with milk. Especially through Anna's comment on feta's 'simple' production process, it becomes obvious that she conceptualises the cheese as a solidified version of milk, as its natural transformation. At the same time, the comment on the 'simple' process links with notions of the rural and the 'authentic', similar to those found in Philippos' imagery of the Cyclades and the white cheeses with no names. Juxtaposed to the 'white' cheeses are the 'yellow' ones which Anna avoids when she wants to eat 'healthy' food. 'Yellow' often connotes foreign-ness, despite the fact that not all foreign cheeses described as 'yellow' are definitely yellow (e.g. Aleka said 'He likes Greek cheeses but he also likes that yellow one, brie'.

Feta owes its whiteness to the use of ewe's milk. It is certainly not a cheese of low fat content (though admittedly it contains less fat than some other harder cheeses) and, with one or two exceptions, there is no cheese category containing less calcium than feta[117]. In symbolic terms, however, feta is representative of goodness in a multiplicity of interconnected ways. It is pure because it reminds people of milk; it is

[117] Typical calcium concentrations in cheeses (mg/100 g. of cheese) are as follows: Emmental 1080, Parmesan 1200, Kefalotiri 800, Gouda 700, Edam 700, and Feta 490. Source: DELTA's R&D department, personal communication.

believed to have low fat and a lot of calcium; it is 'light' and can be easily digested; it is mainly sold from the barrel and is linked to rural imagery as a cheese 'naturally' and 'simply' produced all over the country with no standardised properties. If there is a symbolic connection between whiteness and purity (Mintz 1991, then feta is certainly a good example.

4.4 PART FOUR

Milk and Yoghurt in Relation to Diet and Health

4.4.1 Introduction: a literature review on the anthropology of diet and health

In Athens, the media devote considerable space and time informing people of health issues related to food, and most people communicate on diet and health matters using technical nutritional vocabulary. This does not exclude, however, evidence that scientific nutritional terms and advice are subject to cultural interpretations.

With regard to the identification and naming of diseases as part of the development of medical science, Cassell comments that the word 'illness' stands for what the patient feels when he goes to the doctor, and 'disease' for what he has on the way home (1976:48 cited in Helman 1978:111), emphasising in this way the discrepancy between bodily experience and scientific definition of the condition. Scientific approaches to food and health (health understood as the absence of 'diseases') follow a similar logic: they are grounded on the premise that foods contain specified (named) nutritional elements, the absence or excess of which in the human body leads to the cause of (named) diseases. Biochemistry and the science of nutrition opened new horizons for the understanding of the processes that take place inside the body and their connection to the content of foods. Through scientific findings, people became aware of another level of knowledge, the microcosm inside our bodies and our foods. One implication of such a microscopic level of knowledge is that both body and food have acquired intrinsic properties and are perceived to exist independently of human personal experience.

One implication of the increasing awareness of the link between diet and health in terms of nutritional elements, is the 're-identification' of foods (Fischler 1988:290), in which foods acquire a new identity through the labelling of their ingredients and their nutritional value. Labelling has become a significant source of information and knowledge about how our relation to foods should be perceived. It is revealing that knowing the rudiments about nutrition and using technical nutritional vocabulary to communicate their beliefs about their children's diet constituted for French

mothers evidence of responsible motherhood, while other relational aspects of child-feeding such as mother-child interaction, were almost never raised (Fischler 1986).

Scientific models of food classification place particular emphasis on the physical properties of foods, which are assumed to have a predetermined impact on the human body independently of what the eater expèriences. Fischler argues that in many so-called traditional societies, food is usually classified 'according to the effects supposedly exerted on the organism, not according to the food's physical or sensory characteristics' (1988:949). The most widespread example of food classification based on relational (experiential) rather than intrinsic qualities of food is the hot/cold system of thought that prevails in many parts of the world.

Based on his study of Gujarati notions of diet and health, Pool contends that foods are classified as 'hot' or 'cold' according to the effect that they are thought to have on the person who eats them (1987:390). 'Hot' foods are those perceived to increase the amount of heat inside the body, while 'cold' foods are thought to reduce heat. It is important to understand the relational character of these categorisations; 'hot' and 'cold' are not independent states, but are 'relationships between states' (Manderson 1987:330; Nichter 1986). The system of classification of food as 'hot'/'cold' refers both to foods and diseases (Pool 1987). Diseases that are associated with a hot(ter) state of the body are expressions of the coming out of excessive heat and are manifested on the surface of the body while diseases linked to a cold(er) state of the body, are thought to be situated inside it. In both cases, the body is healed when it regains a hot/cold balance through the consumption of food that reduces/increases body heat.

There are numerous studies around the world on the hot/cold classification, including South India (Nichter 1986), Bangladesh (Rizvi 1986), Malaysia (Manderson 1987), Latin America (Messer 1987; Cosminsky 1977) and the American-Mexican West (Kay and Yoder 1987) among others. Some of them include additional classifications based on the embodied experience of food, such as wet/dry and heavy/light. For example, Pool additionally mentions a classification of foods as 'strengthening, difficult to digest (heavy), easy to digest (light) and flatulent'

(1987:393). In most cases, these are secondary distinctions compared to the prevalence of the 'hot' and 'cold' dimension.

A study of food categories in rural Egypt (Sukkary-Stolba 1987) identifies the heavy/light distinction as the most important evaluating factor in perceptions of diet and health, and digestibility as the dominant criterion for classification. For example, many mothers evaluated solid foods as 'heavy' for toddlers. Mashing and giving small quantities of an item is thought of as a process of transition from 'heavy' to 'light'. There was not always total agreement among mothers about how foods should be assigned. The fact that, for example, eggs were regarded by 80% of the mothers as 'light' and by 20% as 'heavy' (1987:402) shows that food categorisation is not based on objective criteria and essentialised (such as in the case of named nutritional elements) but is grounded on subjective embodied knowledge.

Perceiving food through bodily experience constitutes an immediate and easily understood source of knowledge, the importance of which has been down-played in societies where scientific discourses dominate. As numerous studies have demonstrated, scientific systems of classification co-exist and merge with traditional categorisations. In Malay culture, for example, Western medicines have become part of the local system of classification and are categorised as 'hot' (Beardsworth and Keil 1997:128). A study in a Guatemalan community reveals the flexibility and adaptability of the folk system through the creation of a new food category (alimento) and the extension of an old (fresco) to incorporate new foods and medicines (Cosminsky 1977). Punjabi women in Glasgow confronted with two different systems relating health with diet, explained the recommendations of the one in terms of the other. While they recognised the need of moderating the consumption of butter and *ghee* due to risk of heart attack, they explained the connection in terms of the Scottish weather in which butter solidifies in the body, 'goes inside and sticks there' (Bradby 1997:230).

The above examples suggest that traditional understandings of food and health have not necessarily been replaced by scientific systems of classification but are flexible and adaptable to new information. Examples abound and can also be found in developed countries such as France (Fischler 1986) and England. Based on his

research in the outskirts of London, Helman (1978) describes lay understandings of the germ theory of disease which are based on the divide between nature and culture, and which identify the former as the source of 'colds' and the latter as the source of 'fevers'. His study provides evidence of how people appropriate medical information and make sense of it in their own terms.

Although scientific models of the link between food and health exert considerable influence over public perceptions, scientific and quantitative pronouncements have limited application in everyday decision-making in the kitchen or the supermarket (Beardsworth and Keil 1997, ch.6). In contrast, traditional understandings of diet and health are comprehensible and easy to implement. 'Thus it is hardly surprising that common-sense notions survive and continue to shape nutritional ideologies and practices in modern societies. These notions come in many guises [such as] that excessive sugar consumption causes diabetes, that red meat causes aggressiveness, and that eating fried food causes acne...' (ibid:142-143). In a study in south-east London presented by Keane (1997), the variety of information sources regarding food and health, such as the medical profession, government promoters, the media, advertising, and retailing, caused confusion and scepticism among the informants, who acknowledged as the most valuable source of knowledge their personal body experience. The need for recognising the relevance of embodied knowledge and the significance of 'common-sense' ideas about diet and health in western societies has been receiving more and more attention by nutrition educators. Informing about nutrition is only the first step; persuasion and motivation 'are much greater problems and require a much deeper understanding of the attitudes and beliefs about food, nutrition and health" (COPA 1993, ch.9:12).

By providing comparative ethnographic examples, my aim here has been to show that scientific discourses with regard to food and diet leave room for cultural interpretations. In a context such as urban Greece, beliefs surrounding dairy products are probably not an uncritical repetition of scientific nutritional information, but an appropriated version of popular understandings of such information.

4.4.2 Food classifications in Greece

In Greece, the use of the term 'hot' refers to food which causes a burning sensation either due to spices or high temperature. Used within an ethnic context 'hot' might also connote foreign food. Apart from that, hot/cold evaluations have a rather limited application in food in Greek culture. The Greek language does not distinguish between 'thick' and 'fat', and both concepts are attributed by the adjective '*pakhís*' (thick, fat, fatty but also rich and creamy)[118]. The nouns 'fatness' and 'obesity' (*pakhisarkía*), and 'fat' (*pákhos*), are all derived from the same root. A food can be classified as *pakhí* with regard to its positive qualities, such as its rich and thick texture, with connotations of naturalness, absence of adulteration, wholeness. At the same time, a food can be classified as *pakhí* due to negative qualities, such as its fatty and fattening content. Its negative use tends to be more common.

In the food context, there is no straight forward attribute for the opposite concept of '*pakhí*'. Concepts such as 'thin' or 'slim' (*leptó*) apply in other cases but not in food. When many of my informants wanted to describe a condition conceptually opposed to '*pakhí*', they used the term 'water' (*neró*). 'Water' was used to describe a condition of thinness, lack of texture, and tastelessness. Expressions deriving from water such as '*nerénio*' or '*nerouló*' (lit. watery), '*nerópraghma*' (lit. water-thing) or '*asvestónero*' (lit. lime-water)[119], frequently emerged in references to milk and yoghurt.

Here are some examples. Despina (late seventies, born and brought up in Athens, married to Ilias from Mani), was exposed to rural life through her husband who owned olive trees in the southern Peloponnese. They would travel there together every autumn for the harvest. Despina believes that fresh milk today tastes differently than the milk she remembers in pre-war Athens, but also later in the 1960s, when the dairy company EVGA dominated in the milk market. She remembers stirring the milk and seeing a thick crust forming on top. Today, although there is a lot of talk about the benefits of fresh milk as opposed to

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[118] The adjective *khondrós*, which also means 'fat', has a meaning that tends towards coarseness and roughness. For example, in the context of food the only application of '*khondrós*' is in reference to grounding or cutting as opposed to *psilós* (fine).

[119] Lime in this context refers to the white substance obtained by heating limestone used in constructions.

evaporated, Despina insists on consuming evaporated milk because, as she says, fresh milk is like water and easily disappears:

> I use evaporated milk because fresh milk is not milk, it's something like water (*neróprαghma*). One tin of evaporated milk sees me through five days. Fresh milk is finished in three days. I keep putting and putting it in my coffee and I don't feel it. In the past, we used to buy two *okádhes*[120] of milk in my parents' house. We boiled it, and I used to help my mother stir it. And then sometimes we would buy that milk from EVGA, because it was good milk. Then they turned it into water. Now I want to make caramel creme and the milk doesn't form a crust anymore. In the past, we used to be very careful not to let the milk form a crust on the top, and we would stir it constantly, and then we would cover it with a towel. And still it would form a crust, one finger thick. I tell you, milk now has become like water, it is not milk anymore.

Especially for the older generation, 'thickness' as opposed to 'water' is a central concept in their understanding of change. But it is not only the older generation who use such terms. Marina[121] was talking about her mother's food preferences when she mentioned TOTAL, FAGE's strained yoghurt. This is how she explained why her mother likes to eat only the 'thick' strained yoghurt:

> When you are used to eating normal yoghurt (*kanonikó yaoúrti*), it is difficult to 'fall down' to the watery types (*eínai dhískolo na péfteis sta nerénia*).

Taking into consideration that Marina's mother (Nana) is in her seventies, she has been eating non-industrialised yoghurt, made with non-homogenised milk and with no fat reduction most of her life. This is the yoghurt that Marina calls 'normal', and using the denigrating verb 'to fall down' contrasts it with the 'watery types' which are now available in the market.

The comparison with 'water' is even more frequent in comments related to low fat milk or yoghurt. A common phrase expressed by old as well as young informants regarding low fat dairy products is that 'you can't eat this thing; it's like water'. Not all informants were unhappy with the 'watery' feel of low fat dairy products. Maria, in her late fifties, born and raised in Athens, living in the well-to-do suburb of

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[120] Old weight-measuring system; 1 oka = 1280 grams

[121] Marina (late thirties) is Nana's daughter living in Glyfada in the same house (different flats) with her sister, parents and grandmother.

Kifissia, did not mind consuming industrialised dairy products and, in fact, she was delighted that skimmed milk tastes similar to water because she dislikes the smell and taste of milk:

> During my university years I only drank milk when I was on a diet because it disgusted me and I didn't want to eat anything afterwards. When I turned 50, I started getting worried about osteoporosis and I tried milk with 0% fat. My doctor said that this milk contains all the necessary nutritional elements and no fat. I liked it because it didn't smell. Now I aim to reach a daily consumption of one litre, the whole carton (*ólo to khartókouto*). It doesn't taste of milk and it doesn't smell of milk-ness (*dhen mirízi ghalatíla*). The 0% (*to midhén*) has no smell of milk, it is like water with lime (*íne san neró me asvésti*). It is a tasteless thing. That's why I like it!

Among people of different age groups and backgrounds there was a general tendency to associate products of the dairy industry, especially the low fat ones, with the concept of 'water'. While in many cases this association was regarded as a disadvantage, there were cases, such as Maria's, where the resemblance of milk to water was regarded as positive. Another thing that comes out from Maria's comment is the concept of a 'milk-free milk', i.e. a milk that does not taste or smell like milk, for which Maria was thankful to the dairy manufacturers. This is a point to which I will return later.

I would now like to present another food classification that deserves attention; namely the categorisation of food as 'heavy' and 'light'. As Lupton (1996) found in her research in Australia (Sydney), judgements about the healthiness and goodness of food are sometimes based on the way the food feels in the body, e.g. whether it feels 'heavy' or 'light'. 'Heavy' is an adjective often used to describe 'unhealthy' foods which 'sit in the stomach'. 'Light' foods, on the other hand, are usually described as 'healthy' because they are easily digested. Lupton also contends that in certain cases the binary opposition between 'heavy-unhealthy' and 'light-healthy' is another version of the natural/processed divide. Cooked food, especially if cooked in fat, is considered to be 'heavy', and raw food such as vegetables is considered to be 'light' (1996:82).

The criterion of digestibility, mentioned by Lupton and earlier by Sukkary-Stolba on rural Egypt, seems to be at the centre of heavy/light classifications. In the Greek context, digestibility is indeed a very relevant concept in evaluations of food. What is more, the heavy/light categories are used to articulate social difference between the older and the younger generation.

In the following two examples, young informants describe as 'heavy' the way of cooking of the older generation. In particular, what young people criticise is the excessive use of fat in cooking. Aleka and Philippos find the cooking of Aleka's mother too 'heavy' to digest. The reason was that Aleka's mother uses too much oil:

> Aleka: My mother has old ideas about cooking... she puts more oil, and the food becomes heavier. I was very unhappy during the last few years I spent in my parents' house... I couldn't digest my mother's cooking. I would belch for five hours. And she is not that old, if you think about it.
> Philippos: Every time I taste my mother-in-law's cooking, I can't sleep afterwards. There is one centimetre of oil in every dish she makes. One day she brought moussaká... I had to eat it all with Zantac; I would eat a piece and my belly would kill me; I was suffering from heartburn for two days. We are not used to this cuisine anymore. We don't put oil in the food; just a tiny bit.
> Aleka: The problem with my mother's cooking is not only that she puts three times more oil than we do; like all the older generation, she heats up the oil: she doesn't add it at the end. That makes the food twice as heavy. Personally, I prefer to cook in the oven and I put just a little bit of oil at the end when the food is ready.

Another informant (Mitsi), the same age as Aleka and Philippos, brought up in Athens and living with her husband and her 18-month-old daughter in a flat in Athens, said that her mother does not cook 'heavy' anymore and has cut down on fat for health reasons. From the way she expressed herself, it was obvious that her understanding of the generation gap is indeed influenced by the notion of heaviness. In the following excerpt, she uses the concept of heaviness twice to differentiate herself and her cooking from the older generation:

> Petridou: Have you made any changes in your mother's way of cooking?
> Mitsi: The changes I've made are not essential; rather, they are adaptations to our taste. We don't like things that contain onions. My mother, on the other hand, likes to cook imam122, or rabbit

[122] Baked aubergines with onions and tomato.

> casserole with onions. It's not because my mother cooks heavier; she's cut down a lot- oil, salt- for health reasons. It's because we like it more this way. What I have completely abolished from my cooking is to pour melted oil or butter on pasta because I find that the sauce is enough to give it taste. When I told my mom, she just couldn't believe it. 'You don't melt butter on pasta? she said. 'It'll be tasteless!'. But I have the sauce. And I can also put some cheese on top if I want. Why make it heavier (ghiatí na to epivaríno)?

Strategies for 'lighter' cooking and eating named by informants of all ages ranged from the preparation of sauces by mixing dairy cream or mayonnaise with low fat yoghurt, to the replacement of meals with snacks, especially in the evening. Cheese or yoghurt with fresh fruit and a slice of fresh or dried bread (rusk) was the most popular choice for a 'light' dinner[123]. Without exception, all informants were concerned about eating 'lighter' food in the evening and said that they try not to cook anymore for dinner. Argiro and Charalambos from Crete said that they do not sit at the table for dinner unless they have friends over, and that they prefer to eat a fruit or yoghurt sitting on the veranda. The same age as Argiro, Litsa, from a middle-class Athenian family, also tries to avoid eating dinner but her husband finds it difficult to comply with these new dietary rules. He is used to having a proper meal in the evening:

> I try to avoid eating dinner, but my husband can't. He is used to eating in the evening. He can't sleep on an empty stomach. I would prefer if he had only a yoghurt, or a little bit of cheese.

In earlier examples, the concept of 'lightness' referred to either easy digestibility or to the reduction of fat content. Here, 'light' dinner means less food and preferably food that is not cooked, i.e. it is more 'natural'. It is important to stress that the attributes 'heavy' and 'light' are contextually defined and are based on subjective experience. As becomes evident in the following example the correspondence between the sets of categories heavy/light and processed/unprocessed is reversed, and 'natural' food is characterised as 'heavy', as opposed to processed food which is characterised as 'light'. One would expect that, compared to fresh milk, the highly processed evaporated milk with its strong smell and thick texture would be regarded as 'heavy'. Nevertheless, for Greek mothers, it is fresh milk that is characterised as 'heavy' because they find that the 'natural' content of fresh milk

[123] A 'light' dinner has been widely recommended by nutritional and medical experts.

with all these 'live' organisms makes it 'heavy' for the baby to digest. As Mitsi explained, she hesitates to give her daughter fresh milk because it might be 'heavy' for her:

> I don't give my daughter fresh milk. I don't know why. I guess because paediatricians suggest evaporated. They don't mention fresh milk at all, based on the logic that it is supposedly heavy for the baby. Not supposedly, it is indeed heavy. But I think that I could start giving her fresh milk little by little, maybe at first diluted until her stomach gets used to it.

What does the concept of 'lightness' refer to in the marketing context? Dairy manufacturers in Greece call all dairy products with low fat content 'light'. But the identification of lightness with low fat content is in a sense arbitrary. In other marketing contexts such as beer, coke and cigarettes, lightness is defined in different terms. The common denominator in all uses of the concept 'light' in marketing is the impact of the product on the body after its incorporation. 'Light' food means food of reduced impact. Thanks to the achievements of biotechnology, it is now possible to produce food with reduced impact. Moreover, the shift from reduction (reduced fat) to complete disappearance (fat-free) has become a marker of difference between generations. Research carried out in the US on the consumption of 'light' foods revealed that, while both generations preferred 'light' foods, the older generation preferred the ones with reduced sugar/fat while the younger generation went for the sugar/fat-free (Calorie Control Commentary 1998). Orienting themselves towards a fat-free product, Procter and Gamble patented a synthetic fat product which retains the culinary and textural qualities of the fat, but can not be absorbed by the body. The product, which was called Olestra, was 'a fat that passes straight through the body', 'a fat-free fat' (Morse 1994:178). It is a food with no impact.

The concept of reducing the unwanted impact of food on the body (from protection against harmful organisms to fat reduction) is an important dimension of food manufacturing and its role in society. It relates to the role of culture as protector against the harmful effects of nature. It is the same idea that underlay Mitsi's comment when she referred to fresh milk as heavy. The highly processed evaporated milk reduces nature's strong impact and thus the risk of illness.

The association of food manufacturing with reduced impact, especially with regard to low fat products, has found its place in folk categories through the use of the attribute 'water'. Water is generally regarded as tasteless, running through the body with minimal imposition. This relates to the comment Maria made earlier on milk-free milk. Also, when Litsa referred to fat-free milk, she said: 'The milk with no fat is like water, you can't drink it... Drink it or not, it makes no difference'. On the other hand, water also reveals the suspicion of adulteration, the 'thinning' of the product and the reduction of its flavour and nutritional value in the pursuit of extra profit. This is the other aspect of food manufacturing, which is based on understandings of culture as a threat to nature's beneficial properties.

'Light' dairy products are at the intersection between the two opposing understandings of the Nature/Culture relationship. Due to fat reduction they are positively evaluated but at the same they attract most comments on food manufacturing and adulteration.

4.4.3 The symbolic role of 'light' products

There is hardly a more fundamental concept in cultural understandings of food and its relation to man and society than the polar relation between Nature and Culture. In his classical book, Levi-Strauss (1969) sees cooking as the transformation of nature into culture, as an expression of humanity's gradual alienation from nature. He suggests that different ways of cooking reflect varying understandings of the difference between nature and culture.

In developed societies, one prominent definition of the natural refers to the absence of technology. Particularly in the sphere of food, this takes the form of 'chemicals', i.e. 'components of plants and minerals... converted into something [by human interference] with the capacity to do harm' (Coward 1989:21). In a world 'now apparently suffering from an excess of human ingenuity' (Mintz 1991:107) human interference has acquired negative connotations and the natural has become the opposite of 'chemical'. The problem is that the divide between natural and chemical substances is not at all clear. As Coward puts it, 'many chemicals are 'naturally' occurring or derived from natural substances' (1989:21). This leaves a lot of room for interpretation.

The following dialogue is an example of how a family (Dimitra from the town of Arachova and her two daughters in their twenties) try to make sense of what is healthy to eat and what is not. Their concern is to determine the boundary after which artificial additives stop protecting and start to become harmful:

> Eugenia: These yoghurts, FAGE and the like, do you believe they are yoghurts? They don't contain milk!
> Georgia: I've heard that they make them from whale fat.
> Eugenia: We don't know what they are made of.
> Mina: Do you think it is possible to preserve the fruit juice inside the fruit yogurt for a long time without using chemicals?
> Eugenia: Surely, they've got things inside! They just tell us they don't. I bought one once to try it. It smelled nice. But after the first spoonful I didn't like it at all. Never again.
> Mina: All the bananas and strawberries inside are chemicals. But they are not necessarily dangerous. These e [numbers] for example... We have a list with all the additives. I have read it once or twice. Not all e [numbers] are bad for the health. Some are necessary.
> Eugenia: Those numbers that start with 2 are the most dangerous.

As Atkinson argues, ill-health is perceived to be 'caused by an imbalance between man's natural and cultural elements' (1979:87). Foods that resolve this symbolic opposition are normally perceived as having healing properties . One example is honey and vinegar, which are linked to folk wisdom and alternative medicine, and which are 'naturally' occurring processed foods (1983:11). Milk also has similar attributes with connotations of purity. It is already naturally processed and 'requires no further processing ... other than to render [it] even more "pure" by the removal of "foreign bodies"' (ibid.). Finally, 'health foods' also derive their power from the natural-cultural symbolic resolution (Atkinson 1979) because they are 'culturally' occurring 'natural' foods.

A food category, the symbolic role of which lies on the boundary between the natural and the cultural is 'light' foods. 'Light' foods are at the centre of the two main opposing aspects of food manufacturing: they protect against natural elements perceived as harmful (such as a high quantity of fat), and at the same time they are more exposed to the dangers of additional industrial processing. Underlying the consumption of 'light' foods is the drawing of the boundary between where the artificial stops protecting and starts to become harmful.

Fear of adulteration and high fat content were the two most frequently voiced concerns expressed with regard to milk and yoghurt. At the same time, these products were identified as a source of calcium, and their consumption was considered to be crucial not only for children but for all ages especially over fifty. A feeling of guilt caused by the lower consumption of milk than the one thought necessary was very often expressed by informants. This is an interesting issue by itself because the belief that milk is an indispensable part of the human diet should not be taken for granted. In northern European countries, milk is more easily digested than in the south of Europe, let alone Asian countries (Albala 2000). Also, milk might be a cause of serious allergies: 'Doctors and health visitors are usually so brainwashed regarding the health-giving aspects of milk that they often have great difficulty in accepting that milk can be a health hazard' (Morrow Brown 2000:259)).

Fat content was a primary issue in consumers' perceptions of dairy products, no less important than calcium. Again this is a belief that should not be accepted at face value; according to a European scientific report on the health aspects of dairy products,

> dairy products contribute to fat intake but the available evidence indicates very clearly that consumption of milk is not a factor distinguishing people of either high- or low-fat diets. Therefore, when discussing strategies to reduce fat intake, terms such as "dairy products" should not be used (COPA 1993:98).

The food industry has played a significant role in shaping perceptions of risk and health regarding dairy products and in particular fat content. Greek manufacturers have used the fat content of dairy products as a central element in their competitive marketing strategies. The companies have segmented the market into numerous fat categories. Low fat milk, for example, is produced with 1.5%, 1% and 0% fat content. Set yoghurt is available in 0%, 2% and 4%. Strained yoghurt is available in 0%, 5% and 10% fat content, and when DELTA introduced the VERUS line, they also produced yoghurts of 8% and 12%. Fat variations also exist in fruit yoghurts. As a result, a strong association has been established between dairy products and fat content, which is further enhanced by medical advice.

Different reactions were recorded regarding the fat content of dairy products. Aleka and Philippos refuse to accept general beliefs about the association of milk with fat, despite the criticism they receive from their parents and friends:

> Philippos: My father tells us off because we drink full fat milk.
> Aleka: Well, that I don't understand. He insists that we drink light. Speaking for myself, I've never had problems with my weight and I've always consumed full-fat. I don't consider that a person is on a diet by drinking light milk.
> Philippos: But light is not drinkable (dhen pínetai)! I can't drink it. The other day I bought 0%. It is water. Just water.
> Aleka: I would hate milk if I had to drink light. I can't believe that anybody gets fat because of milk. There are other things that make us fat, let's not pretend. They look at me as if I was crazy, and tell me: 'You drink all that milk and you buy full-fat?'

Argiro is very concerned with the fact that she is overweight. She identified yoghurt as a source of calcium, which she regarded as being particularly essential for women over fifty. She feels she should consume only low fat yoghurt, ideally with 0% fat content. Her problem is that she finds those yoghurts disgusting, and so she trades off with 2% and 4%:

> I eat the 2%, sometimes I eat AGELADITSA[124] but it has 4%. I can't eat the 0%, I just can't. I prefer to drink a glass of water and go to sleep on an empty stomach. 0% is a disgrace (*éskhos*)! Once or twice I bought it and I had to close my eyes to eat it.

Nana, too, finds 0% yoghurt 'like lime in limewater' and consumes the 2%, as advised by her doctor:

> The endocrinologist recommended yoghurt with 2%, and so we got used to eating 2%. SILOUET[125], we can't eat that thing; it is like lime in limewater (eínai san asvéstis me asvestónero). My mother likes the full-fat one, TOTAL. She says either I eat properly or I don't eat at all.

'Light' milk and yoghurt are entangled in discourses of health in more ways than one: a) being dairy products, they represent the most important source of calcium b) they are fat-reduced or even fat-free (which is thought to be a blessing considering their strong association with fat); and c) they are subject to additional processing which makes people more suspicious.

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[124] FAGE's 4% cow's white set yoghurt
[125] FAGE's 0% and 2% cow's white set yoghurt

For many Athenians, 'light' milk and yoghurt represent a positive solution to the harmful effects of 'natural' elements such as fat. For others, 'light' milk and yoghurt are the personification of evil. Despina is one of these cases. Because she is overweight and has relatively high cholesterol she is expected to eat low fat yoghurt. She reported, however, that she can not digest industrial yoghurt because it makes her belch (this is how she recognises if a yoghurt is adulterated). So, she had to forgo yoghurt altogether:

> I stopped eating yoghurts because they make them from milk powder and they affected my stomach. I belched afterwards. Let alone the fact that yoghurt is not good for cholesterol. You have to buy, they say, the light (*ta láit*). So, instead of buying those which have chemicals inside (*aftá pou ékhoun fármaka mésa*), I prefer not to eat them at all.

Apart from low fat dairy products, the other dairy category that evoked anxiety about adulteration was fruit yoghurts[126]. Fruit yoghurts were regarded as inauthentic. The popularity of yoghurt in the West is a relatively recent development that relates mostly to the latter half of the last century. Although it is a newcomer to the West, in the eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and Central Asia, yoghurt production goes as far back as prehistoric times (Shaida 2000). One implication of having a long yoghurt tradition in Greece is that yoghurt is perceived as staple, part of the everyday diet, and not as delicatessen. As discussed in Chapter Three, on supermarket shelves fruit yoghurts do not move as fast as white yoghurts, and are positioned on the upper shelves of the fridge cabinet. The relative unpopularity of fruit yoghurts might be due to their close association with fears of adulteration. This issue emerged both from my research and from research undertaken by the dairy industry, which was presented to me by a marketing executive. Anxiety about the purity of the product increased when it contained fruit.

The emergence of fruit yoghurts in Athens came as a result of the advanced industrialisation of dairy production, which started to take place in the 1960s. The first fruit yoghurt (VELOUTELA) was produced by FAGE in 1983 and was made from a mixture of fruit juice with yoghurt so that the fruit yoghurt had a soft glazed

[126] At the time of fieldwork there was no milk with fruit flavours circulating in the market.

surface (set yoghurt) and was available in a variety of colours. Today, VELOUTELA as a product-line comprises many flavours which are also available with reduced fat (VELOUTELA light). The new generation of fruit yoghurts in the 1990s has been the mixture of the yoghurt with pieces of fruit instead of juice (stirred yoghurt), which reduces the strength of colour in the yoghurt.

Many examples from my research showed that fruit yoghurts were surrounded with suspicion. For Despina, who spent seventy years of her life eating white yoghurt, fruit yoghurts are an invention of the dairy industry for making more profit:

> In order to sell more yoghurts, they have produced now those with fruits inside. They would do anything! You see how yoghurt has become now... It is not yoghurt anymore.

Despina's brother made a similar comment when he remarked that it was outrageous to pay 340 drachmas for a fruit yoghurt, which was approximately one third higher than the price of white yoghurt. He said, 'I can take the fruit and put them in myself!'.

Ioanna, being very conscious about chemical additives, profoundly dislikes all industrially made food. She avoids all mass-produced yoghurts but especially "the watery ones" (reduced fat yoghurts) and "the ones with fruit". She believes that fruit and yoghurt are incompatible in nature and that a fruit yoghurt can not be made without the use of additives:

> All yoghurts are equally bad, so I don't bother to choose. I only try to buy strained yoghurt, not the watery ones or the ones with fruit. They are not pure. Somebody told me that if you put fruit in pure yoghurt, the yoghurt will separate.

An interesting comment came from Mitsi who, being young and brought up in the city, does not mind fruit yoghurts but still prefers white yoghurts. The fact that she called white yoghurts 'simple' and 'plain' indicates that she perceives fruit yoghurts to be more elaborate and subjected to additional processing. It is revealing that despite the fact that fruit yoghurts are expected to have stronger flavour, Mitsi finds them tasteless and without substance, evidently due to the association with extra processing:

Petridou: Do you think that fruit yoghurts are popular?
Mitsi: I believe that the simple yoghurts (*ta aplá*) are more popular. Because we are more traditional, I don't know... If I had to choose for myself, I would buy the simple, plain ones (*ta aplá, ta skéta*). The yoghurt with fruit feels like it has lost its substance, its taste (*ékhei khásei tin ousía tou, ti yéfsi tou*).

Another culturally significant aspect about fruit yoghurts is their sweetness. The traditional yoghurt is expected to have a sour acid taste. Especially in Crete yoghurt has the reputation of being particularly sour. Sweetness in yoghurt has foreign connotations and can also refer to ethnic identity. A Cretan informant, Eleni, said that she prefers the imported yoghurt to the Greek because she finds it sweeter:

> When I need strained yoghurt, to make tzatziki for example, I buy strained yoghurt from the supermarket counter where it is sold in bulk (*khíma me to kiló*). I think it comes from abroad, maybe from France, because it is somewhat sweeter. I think there is both Greek and foreign yoghurt at the counter. Unpackaged. The Greek is sourer, the foreign sweeter. To tell you the truth, personally, I often prefer the imported.

Fruits in yoghurt are perceived as a foreign element, as an addition and an extra process, something that is associated with industrialisation. Fruit yoghurts are considered to be sweeter, coloured and 'complicated', a delicacy rather than the staple food with which yoghurt is normally associated. By focusing on beliefs around the consumption of fruit yoghurts and low-fat dairy products, which strongly evoke associations with commercialisation, I have tried to highlight how different understandings of the nature/culture opposition find expression in everyday life, how they are resolved and constantly negotiated. In order to explore understandings of the relation between food and health, I concentrated on lay attributes of food such as 'thick', 'watery', 'heavy' and 'light' and the various ways in which they are used to communicate perceptions of the dairy industry as both protecting but also endangering public health.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In the first part of the chapter I focused on Cretan immigrants in Athens and on ways in which food is used as a marker of identity within the context of the city. Social difference is expressed in terms of quality (such as the concept of 'untamed' flavours) but most importantly in terms of food abundance and plenitude. In the second part, a more official discourse about Crete is examined, based on the nutritional value of the Mediterranean diet. Within this context, Crete emerges as a symbol of purity and health but also of Greekness. The diet of the Cretans in the 1960s becomes part of a symbolic discourse for the nation which rejects 'western' dietary influences. In the third part, the focus is on native middle-class Athenians and the role of cheese in cultural constructions of the rural. While in the Cretan community formal events are celebrated through the abundance of Cretan food, among Athenians of the older generation, formality is conveyed through foreign food such as French cheeses. At the same time, the sense of change, which is discussed in all sections, becomes manifested among the Athenian households through the shift towards Greek traditional food. Social distinction between the generations is expressed through the rejection of 'pretentiousness' and a preference for food of Greek origin. Among Cretan immigrants, the sense of change is felt in two ways: first, through the absence of food abundance always provided by the parents from the village; and also through the younger generation who were brought up in the city and who channel information that contests the image of rural food as pure. The last section deals, too, with understandings of change but in reference to the experience of food commercialisation summarised in food attributes such as 'watery'.

There are two kinds of methodological approach represented in this chapter. The first, which is closer to the classical understanding of ethnography, was used in the study of Cretan immigrants in Athens. This is a case where social boundaries are predetermined and food is approached in its ability to convey a sense of community. The other approach takes material culture as a starting point for the drawing of social boundaries. This involves focusing on the dairy product and reporting on cultural issues and constellations of meaning that become relevant with respect to the particular product. As a result of this approach, parts 2,3 and 4 refer to different

dairy products and different sets of issues associated with them. Butter is studied with reference to olive oil, cheese with reference to the cultural construction of *tópos*, and milk/yoghurt with reference to food commercialisation. The fact that they are all dairy products made from the same raw material did not exclude a wide differentiation in their cultural meanings. This brings me to the contribution of the systems of provision approach, which is the topic of the next chapter.

CONCLUSIONS

As economic processes become increasingly important in structuring social relations, and as these processes become less and less place-focused (Lash and Urry 1987), the need emerges to develop new approaches in anthropological research, which capture the rapid change in capitalist processes and their cultural implications. My wish in the present thesis has been to emphasise the importance of economic structures in the construction of social relations and the negotiation of cultural concepts. For this purpose, I chose as focus for my research a commodity chain, and I explored the discourses that emerged within different contexts in relation to this particular chain. Appadurai (1986:27) refers to this kind of approach as a 'commodity ecumene', which he defines as 'a transcultural network of relationships linking producers, distributors and consumers of a particular commodity or set of commodities'.

A commodity chain approach presupposes that commodities are not essentialised as a manifestation of disembedded, 'western' societies and as an alienating force; on the contrary, commodities are thought to constitute one of the central mechanisms of cultural negotiation and change in contemporary societies. Instead of denoting the end of the anthropological object of study, commodities have come to its very centre, opening new horizons for the development of the discipline (Miller 1995a).

Of relevance to the commodity chain approach, has also been the contribution of material culture studies with regard to the role of objects in the construction of social relations. The material culture perspective allows for a study of commodities as material objectification of discourses, and as a material field where power relations are contested and negotiated (Miller 1987; Shanks and Tilley 1992) .

From a material culture perspective, there is no need to separate between economic and cultural processes. The distinction between the spheres of economy and culture, which a material culture approach transcends (Miller 1987), has deeply permeated the study of commodities and their role in society. Most anthropological studies of

the role of commodities in the construction of social relations have tended to focus on consumption, while they down-play the significance of the capitalist processes of production and distribution. Anthropological ethnographic studies have focused on the study of family relationships and the symbolism of food, but competition between brands, the position of goods on supermarket shelves, and global processes, such as EU regulations, have been subject to relatively little investigation as to their micro-level effects in the sphere of consumption. Such capitalist processes have been considered to be mainly part of business studies and their exploration has been neglected by social anthropologists, with only few exceptions (e.g. Lien 1997; Moeran 1996b). Besides the lack of integration of consumption with processes of production and distribution, another aspect, which has almost entirely been overlooked, is the negotiation of culture as part of manufacturer-retailer relations. These issues have been tackled only from an economic and business perspective which, however, tends to study commercial processes independently from the wider context of consumers, their family life and cultural conceptualisations.

A commodity chain approach, on the other hand, takes into consideration a variety of factors (economic, political, technological, cultural, etc.) that turn out to be important for consumption choices (Fine and Leopold 1993) and for shaping the cultural meaning of particular commodities. The difference between Fine and Leopold's approach and the one I have taken in the present thesis lies in the causal relation between the contexts of production, distribution and consumption. In the thesis, I have explored different contexts within the chain as interconnected sites, where opposing discourses and ideologies may emerge. Multi-sited ethnography allows for the possibility of critical juxtaposition between various interconnected sites (Marcus 1998). Instead of assuming that there is a logical continuity between the spheres of production and consumption, I have also considered the possibility that different sites may reproduce their own logic and categorisations, which are sometimes irrelevant to those found at other sites (Miller 1987).

The approach taken here is not intended to displace anthropological studies that have placed emphasis on food symbolism, but to complement them by examining the way social and economic relations are joined together by the biography of the commodity. What has emerged in this research is not an opposition to the

anthropological analysis of symbolic meanings and oppositions in food that has flourished following the work of Douglas, Bourdieu and others. Rather, emphasis has been given on how the meaning of food is constructed out of the complex interaction of various forces, including those of commerce and consumption. Instead of separating the cultural sphere from the economic, food and its meaning are understood to result from a process, where no distinction is made between commercial and non commercial factors.

In order to draw together some of the insights gained by a commodity chain approach and to highlight its advantages for anthropological research, I will suggest two ways in which this approach has proved useful. One way is by comparing the meaning of commodities and by suggesting how their system of provision may have contributed to differences in their symbolic properties. Another way is by focusing on the production of representations of space and time produced within various sites of the commodity chain with regard to relations of power and their objectification in commodity form.

Fine and Leopold (1993) suggest that the possibility to focus on particular commodities is one of the most significant advantages of a vertical approach because each commodity involves a different configuration of related factors in its system of provision (e.g. advertising, technology, industrial competition, distribution network, and so on). Approaches that generalise across commodities miss out on the relative weight that each factor has for different commodities and, therefore, on the different configurations of power relations within the chain.

In order to prove their point about different commodities having different systems of provision that have a varying impact on consumption choices, Fine and Leopold proceed to a comparison food and clothing. In the present research, differences in the system of provision emerged within one single group of food commodities (dairy products). Although all dairy products derived from the same raw material (milk), there was a significant variation in the issues they were mostly related with in the sphere of consumption.

As concern with fat content was expressed with relation to all dairy products, one is led to the simple conclusion that fat contains the same meaning in all four cases (milk, yoghurt, cheese and butter). The fact that fat content emerged as a common aspect to all dairy products does not necessarily mean that fat was always conceptualised in the same way. In the case of both milk and yoghurt, fat content was linked with fears about industrial processing. In the case of cheese, fat content was often associated to the colour and origin (Greek/foreign) of cheese. With regard to butter, it was not the percentage of fat content that mattered but the *kind* of fat (as opposed to olive oil).

Most of the above observations, which were made at the level of consumption, were directly related to the system of provision of each dairy product. The fact that fat content in milk and yoghurt played a central role in the way the products were conceptualised, was to a great extent due to the segmentation by dairy manufacturers of the milk and yoghurt market into many fat categories. For example, we saw that white yoghurt alone has been available in 0%, 2%, 3.85%, 4%, 5%, 6%, 8%, 10% and 12% fat content. This may also account for the close association of fat content with fears of industrial processing. In the case of cheese, price controls delayed the entrance of big manufacturers into the cheese market. Branded cheese made its first appearance in the 1990s, and its market share still remains as low as 10% of the total sales. Cheese is still produced in many small and middle-size dairies and is mostly sold in bulk at supermarkets. Unlike milk and yoghurt, where manufacturers dominate in the market and have power over retailers, in the cheese market retailers have more control. As a result, there are few 'light' cheeses in the market and the concept of 'light' cheese has not been promoted. Most consumers associate low fat cheese with mizithra, a fresh white cheese that has low fat content because it is produced from whey after the principal cheese has been extracted. Fatty cheeses are often thought to be the yellow foreign cheeses, such as gouda, probably due to the mild taste of the cheese and the association of yellow colour with butter.

In the case of butter, fat content was the most important factor in accounting for its relatively low level of consumption. The system of provision of butter entirely differs from that of milk, yoghurt or cheese. Due to low milk quotas and the surplus of butter in the EU (Grant 1991), the big dairy manufacturers have not shown

interest in the production and promotion of local butter. Whereas in other countries, local butter producers have emphasised the 'natural' qualities of butter as opposed to the 'artificiality' of margarine (Pantzar 1995; Visser 1996), in Greece, margarine producers did not find similar resistance. As a result, butter and margarine, instead of representing a symbolic opposition, became two concepts easily interchanged. What proved to be of great importance in the case of butter, was its structural opposition to olive oil, which became a powerful symbol of health in the context of the Mediterranean diet discourse. Although the Mediterranean diet model was one of the most important factors that shaped consumption beliefs and practices in butter, it had only minor implications for the consumption of other dairy products.

By taking fat content as an example, I have tried to show how the study of the symbolic meaning of food requires a more sophisticated approach, which also considers the system of provision of commodities and the factors that prove most relevant to the production of cultural meaning. It is quite revealing how fat content has different meaning according to dairy product- a meaning that can only be explained through a commodity chain approach.

Another way in which a commodity chain approach may prove useful for social research is by comparing the production of knowledge and representations of cultural concepts that emerge within the different sites. Directly related to this approach, is the notion of power in the representation of knowledge, 'of who produces knowledges and the degrees to which those knowledges are trusted or valued' (Crang 1996:64). Power is here understood as the ability to promote in objectified form a discourse and a way of classification that serves particular interests. As an example, I will refer to the way representations of space and time (the traditional and the modern) are objectified and contested through dairy products.

I will start from official definitions of Greekness at a national level. As was mentioned in the Introduction, from the 1970s to the 1980s, the dominant political ideology of the relation of Greece to the 'West' changed. In the 1970s, an overriding priority for the Karamanlis government was the accession of Greece to the EEC, expressed in the slogan 'Greece belongs to the West'. When the Socialist party of

Papandreou took over in the 1980s, there was a strong element of national pride in their political ideology, stated in the slogan 'Greece belongs to the Greeks' (Clogg 1992). After the two oil crises of the 1970s, the need for modernisation through industrial development became urgent, as the country could no longer support its huge trade deficit through foreign sources of exchange. At the end of the 1980s, the Association of Greek Industrial Manufacturers organised an extensive campaign to promote the concept that the country's welfare depends on the development of the Greek industry, and to urge consumers to buy Greek products.

In the middle of the 1990s, definitions of Greekness inside and outside the Greek borders were re-negotiated in view of the introduction of the EU regulation on geographical indications for agricultural products. In Greece, the EU regulation had great impact through Greek efforts to protect feta as a cheese of Denominated Origin. Feta's Greekness was defined in terms of a pastoral imagery of sheep and goat shepherding. What stood for most Greeks as a symbol of backwardness, became the key concept of the nation's purity and authenticity, and evidence for a continuity between ancient past and present.

At a micro-level, representations of Greek tradition and rural imagery constituted fields of social distinction. As discussed in chapter 4, there were different approaches to the rural between immigrants and native Athenians. While for the former the rural represented their home, where food was pure and abundant, middle class Athenians associated the rural with backwardness, and indulged themselves with western imported goods, such as French cheese.

Social distinction with relation to the notions of modernity and tradition was also expressed in terms of generations. The second generation of Cretan immigrants did not share their parents' view that village food was good and pure. Their conceptualisation of the rural was that of an uncontrolled situation where farmers made extensive use of chemicals and the land was polluted with radioactivity. In contrast, the younger generation of native Athenians criticised the 'pretentiousness' of the older generation for their interest in foreign food, and regarded the rural as a source of 'real', 'authentic' food.

Dairy manufacturers also played a role in representing the modern and the traditional and in promoting certain aspects of the rural. They did this, however, following a strategy that would create space for the developing industry. The main forces against which Greek manufacturers were competing was multinational companies, which promoted evaporated milk as a superior milk of 'European' standards.

In the end of the 1980s, FAGE and DELTA emerged as the two most important producers of milk and yoghurt in Athens. Within a political-economic context of a huge national trade deficit in combination with inadequate state food control[127], the two dairy companies considered themselves to be torchbearers of modernisation in Greece, by investing in industrial installations and by providing products of high quality standards. This ideology was objectified in their product advertisements. The competition between DELTA (fresh milk) and multinational companies (evaporated milk) was articulated in terms of progress, modernisation and trust. While fresh milk was associated with installations and technology, the image of Greece that was promoted was that of a modernised country, capable of competing with the industrially progressed 'Europe'. DELTA's slogan 'here, we drink DELTA' was a strong assertion of national pride. FAGE, also, were proud to modernise yoghurt and make it popular among the younger generation. What is more, it has been considered one of the biggest achievements of the company that FAGE introduced Greek yoghurt (TOTAL) to the Europeans through an extensive exports network.

Dairy manufacturers represented the distinction between the traditional and the modern by developing a code of aesthetics in product packaging. Tradition was associated with the use of Greek language and realistic depiction of animals, while modernity was conveyed through abstract design and foreign brand names. By following this aesthetic code, manufacturers identified as traditional the dairy products which required no additional processing (e.g. 4% white set yoghurt). In opposition, the dairy products identified as modern were low fat yoghurts and fruit yoghurts. The distinction between cow's milk and sheep's milk, which before the

[127] Until 1999 when the Institution of Food Control was established, responsibility for food control was scattered among four different ministries.

War stood as a symbolic opposition between progress ('civilisation') and backwardness, was substantially down-played by the dairy companies. Through the EC regulation on the protection of agricultural products, dairy manufacturers re-introduced the distinction between cow and sheep as the most fundamental element in the marketing of their cheese products. What is more, by carefully selecting the brand names, they distinguished between Greek (traditional) cheeses made from goat-sheep milk (no special brand name), 'semi-traditional' cheeses (which were the same types of cheese but from cow's milk and which were given the name of localities) and 'modern' cheeses, which referred to foreign types of cheese and had foreign brand names.

Pastoral Care

The notions of progress and modernisation in association with Greece, to which I referred earlier in the context of marketing, were promoted by the dairy manufacturers in an effort to gain the trust of Greek consumers. In the mid 1990s, structures of competition changed, as evaporated milk became less popular and the competition in fresh milk among Greek manufacturers increased. When, in 1993, FAGE launched fresh milk, they promoted it in the context of love and family relations. As a result, DELTA, who was market leader, changed their marketing approach to milk. Instead of industrial installations, milk was linked with notions of freshness, nature, motherhood and care. Within this discourse, the company emerged as an agent, who had the technological means to take care of consumers by providing them nature as intact as possible. This argument was used by DELTA in milk, where nature was equalled to freshness, and by FAGE in cheese, where nature was identified with tradition. The companies were competing in being the best providers of 'pastoral care'.

Food provisioning as a form of feeding constitutes a medium of control (Potamianou and Carapanos 1984). In their role as 'pastoral care-takers', manufacturers compete in symbolic and economic terms with more traditional forms of food production, such as the agricultural production of fragmented, family-based land. Like rural parents, who send food from the village, which embodies parental love, care and the value of *tópos*, dairy manufacturers emerged as family food providers offering the same kind of protection and care.

In the last decade, retailers have emerged as a new force seeking to increase their power and control over the food system. One of the ways in which they try to limit the power of manufacturers is through undermining the dominance of brands. In the context of marketing, brand building is a significant source of power for the company (Sobard 1994) and it involves considerable investment in advertising and promotion. The brand is normally the vehicle through which manufacturers seek to build relations of loyalty and trust with the consumer. Because the big dairy manufacturers control the production of fresh milk, retailers have not succeeded yet in producing own-label fresh milk and yoghurt. (They only have own-label evaporated milk). The way they have sought to limit the power of manufacturers is by changing the principles of product classification and display on the shelves. Instead of giving priority to the brand and the manufacturer (as used to be the case in the past), many chains today choose to categorise fresh milk and yoghurt based on other criteria, such as fat content. In contrast, small corner shops, which depend on the power of the brand, display dairy products in the mode of categorisation imposed by the companies.

In the case of cheese, the balance of power is more on the side of retailers. Cheese is mostly sold in bulk at the counter, where retailers have more power to choose their suppliers, persuade customers and categorise the cheese in a way that serves their best interest. Based on the argument that the selling of cheese in bulk supports small cheese producers and enhances the agricultural economy, retailers have sustained as much as possible the association of cheese with place of origin rather than producer.

The examples I have presented by no means summarise the thesis or exhaust the many aspects of the commodity chain of dairy products. Rather, they are suggestions of how the thesis as a whole constitutes a useful approach, which complements more traditional forms of study and which points the way forward to the advantages of a commodity chain approach. Overall, my aim has been to demonstrate that there should be an openness to the different kinds of relationships that are constituted within commodity chains and the different social and cultural contexts that both illuminate and are illuminated by their study.

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